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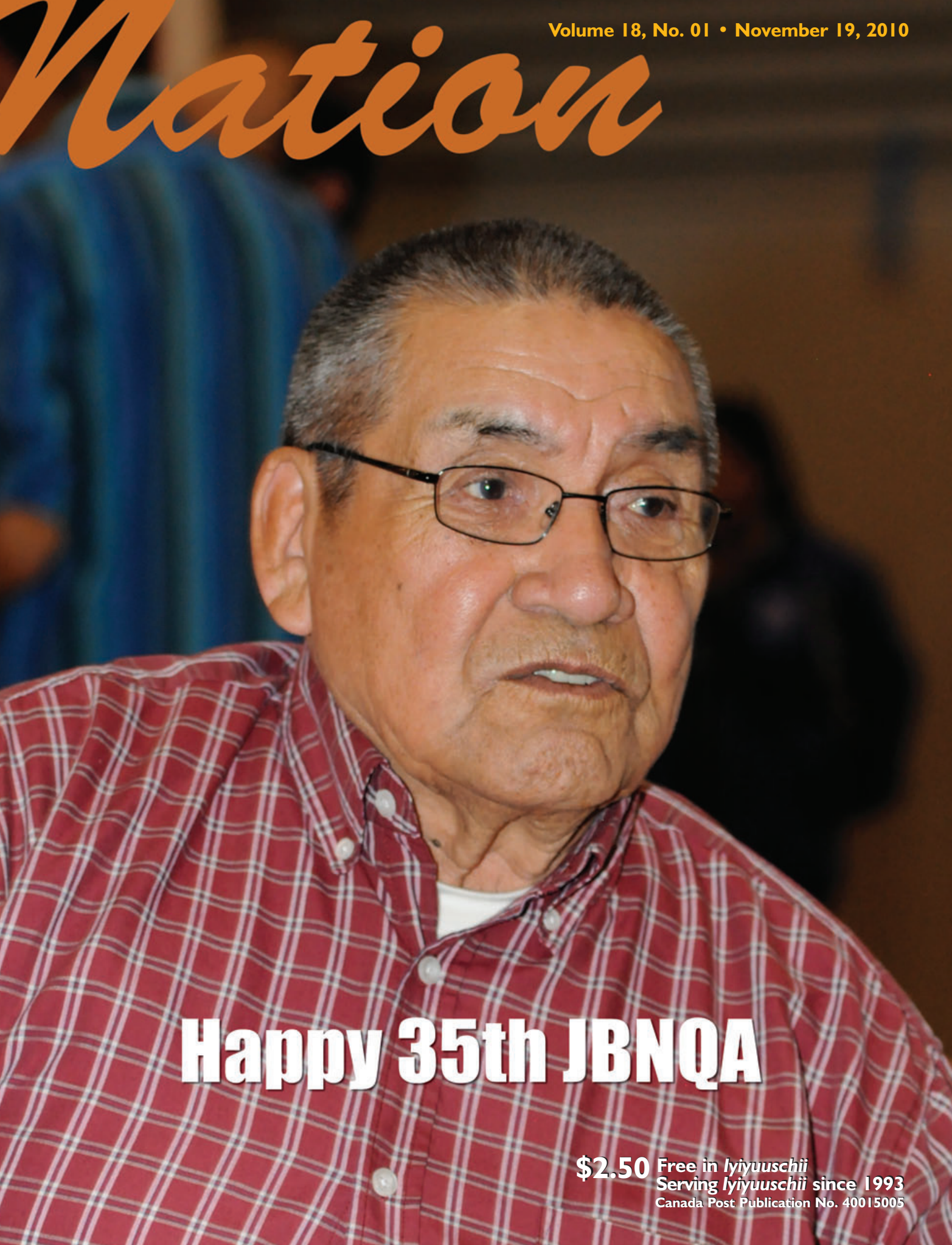
Nation



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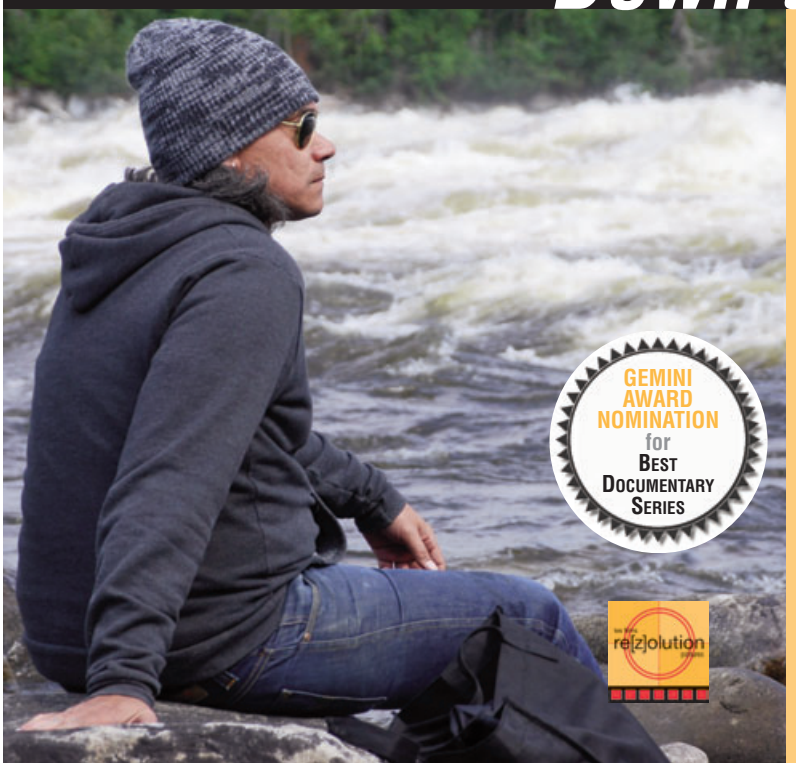

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35 years of grumbling

By Will Nicholls

It has been 35 years since the Crees signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Why it only seems like yesterday to many. This Agreement was hailed as the first modern treaty. Indeed it is the model many Aboriginal groups around the world use as a base for their negotiations.

Yes, I agree that this Agreement was imposed upon us. Though the Crees won the first court case under Judge Malouf, the Quebec Court of Appeal overturned that decision six days later without any new evidence. At that time the Cree lawyers said it was time to negotiate as the dams would be in place by the time we made it to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Even though there was no real choice Crees, along with their lawyers and consultants, were hardasses when it came to the actual negotiations. In it were things no other First Nations had ever achieved before, like control of education, justice, policing, health and social services, economic development, roads, and the list goes on.

Some other First Nations called the Crees sell-outs back then because of the extinguishment clause and others. Even in the Cree camp there was grumbling as some felt we should have fought until the bitter end.

SODAB, an economic engine for the Crees, helped many a fledgling business in the nine communities start or expand until it was gutted by those who never paid back loans. Surprisingly, it was the small businesses that paid back the most, leading to more grumbling.

Subsequent agreements and add-on agreements would be both hailed and nailed by insiders and outsiders, Cree and non-Cree alike. Other residents and non-residents of Eeyou Istchee gathered around the negotiation tables demanding their "rightful" share of the smallgese (opposite of largess).

Soon a new group of grumblers arose; the Jamesians, many of whom never really set foot in Eeyou Istchee. Without much fanfare they received around $20 million for their pain and loss concerning the James Bay hydroelectric projects. These poor displaced peoples gathered around the edge of Eeyou Istchee (except for the formally illegal Radisson) seemed to be warming themselves at the Cree campfires. Eventually their grumbling lead to the creation of the Municipality of James Bay. This, of course, lead to an increase in the grumbling by Crees.

Shortly after the Crees signed the Paix des braves and there was much grumbling within and without the Cree camps. Two more rivers went into the Hydro-Québec plans for James Bay and Crees got business deals and jobs. After that was the new relationship agreement with the Feds seeing $1.4 billion made it into the Cree coffers in return for us taking over certain federal responsibilities. The grumbling this time was quite heavy outside the Cree camps as non-Crees thought we were getting too much.

All in all, though, the JBNQA will always be an important cornerstone of our modern Cree society. It has molded and shaped our society, adding layer after layer of rights and bureaucracies. When you think of the Crees who had to deal with fighting the La Grande Complex, you have to remember there were no college or university graduates among them unlike today. And in looking at it that way they did an amazing job. Sure things could be better. Hindsight is a wonderful tool when used properly to ensure old problems don't become new problems, but after 35 years it's time to stop grumbling and get to work.

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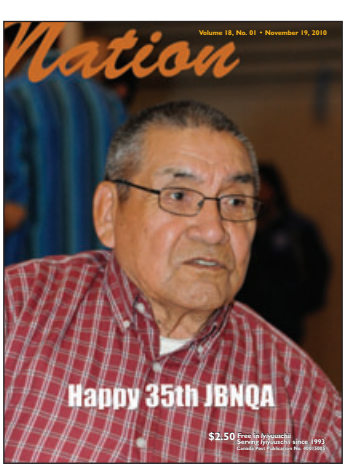

on the cover:
Robert Kanatewat

photo by:
Neil Diamond

Makin bacon

By Sonny Orr

One of the many things I enjoy in life, just like other people around the globe, is making a decent buck or two. In the world of today, making money is either getting harder to do or easier, depends on who you talk to. Like everyone can tell, there are two sides to the coin – one heads and the other tails. Either way, it's a coin. Saving money seems to be a little harder to do, with banks getting stingier and stingier and interest returns around the fifteenth of a percent or so.

Alas, what does one need to do to get into business in Eeyou Istchee? Work hard and sacrifice some parts of your present life and get into the world of making money for yourself. I tell you, if there was a tough market out there, it seems to be the local markets take the most beating and local businessmen must have a set of rules to guide them. As I've told many people who cared to listen, it has a lot to do with who you think you are and whether or not you are really right about yourself.

Take the following quiz to see if you really got what it takes to make money.

1. True or False – There is no love in business. If you said true, then you are half way there to being a smart business person. If you said false, then you have to admit that you are wrong and say it's true.

2. Saving pennies don't count – True or False. If you said true, you get another point and it gets you a little ahead of the red line, which today, is just fine. If you think that pennies are just pennies, wait until you have thrown away a few thousand before admitting your small error in judgement.

3. Customers are always right – If you said yes, it is obvious that you are usually on the purchasing end. If you said false, it means that you are usually the type of salesperson who ignores the customers' wishes. If you didn't say anything, you venture ahead a full 10% to being a savvy business person.

4. All bankers are cruel people who won't lend you money. If you said yes because you were rejected at the bank for a loan, that's because you haven't felt the real cruelty of having to pay it back without money. If you said no, you are probably already a good customer at the bank and can get the true value of yourself using real cash from other people.

5. Time is money – This should be a no-brainer. Do you see the number of people all around you who talk for a living? Politicians, newscaster, weathermen, we all pay them to keep us occupied for no real reason other than to give them more money of course. If you are anyone in those categories, that principle applies too. Now, if golfing were a real business you could get paid even if you botched the last surgery on the ninth hole using your BlackBerry to guide your intern through a complicated quadruple cranial dissection of a lobotomized customer (I mean patient) and make room for a PayPass interact chip with medical insurance so the next time, you'll get paid quicker. If you said no, you must be on some social-aid program.

6. If you got most of these questions in your favour, you probably got what it takes to be a business person. If you don't feel comfortable with your responses, don't worry, you will make a good customer.

7. Finally, good guys always win. If you said "huh" and scratched your head, go back to question one. If you said no, you are probably guilty of some wrongdoing. If you said yes, success is usually guaranteed, and you can pick up your Much Belated Award for business.

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EDITORIAL BOARD
L. Stewart, W. Nicholls, N. Diamond, E. Webb

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Will Nicholls

IYIYUU AYIMUUN EDITOR
Brian Webb

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Martin Siberok

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
N. Diamon, E. Webb, S. Orr, A. German, X. Kataquapit,

PHOTOGRAPHY
A. German, N. Diamond, W. Nicholls, D. Valade

DIRECTOR OF FINANCES
Linda Ludwick

SALES REPRESENTATIVES
Danielle Valade, Ginette Grégoire

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Claire MacKinnon

THANKS TO: Air Creebec

WHERE TO REACH US:
POSTMASTER:
The Nation PRODUCTION OFFICE
4529 CLARK, #403
MONTREAL, QC., H2T 2T3
EDITORIAL & ADS
TEL.: 514-272-3077, FAX: 514-278-9914
The Nation HEAD OFFICE
P.O. BOX 151, CHISASIBI, QC. J0M 1E0
www.nationnews.ca
E-MAIL ADDRESSES:
Editorial: nation@beesum-communications.com
news@beesum-communications.com
Ads: for Danielle Valade
ads@beesum-communications.com
for Ginette Gregoire
publicity@beesum-communications.com
Classifieds: beesum@beesum-communications.com

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Clear cut issue

Waswanipi and Greenpeace join to save the last untouched trapline

By Amy German

In an attempt to save their one remaining trapline from clear cutting, Waswanipi Chief Paul Gull and a handful of community members and representatives from Greenpeace staged a protest in front of the offices of the EACOM Timber Corporation and Premier Jean Charest on November 3.

Staging their defensive front, Gull and Nicholas Mainville, of Greenpeace Quebec, unveiled a large photograph of a "symbolic barricade" that the two set up the previous week when tallymen and activists blocked a forestry road with a large sign telling EACOM to back off.

"We made a symbolic barricade with this sign on the road to stop the destruction of the forest in the Broadback Valley region. As you can see, those are people from the land, they are tallymen and trappers, they are the ones who have made this effort to go ahead and we want to see if the government will respond to our requests," said Gull

Greenpeace and the Cree are demanding that two bridges not be built over the Broadback River that would give EACOM (which recently bought out Domtar) access to the last remaining virgin forest the community has access too.

Gull explained that not only is the area reachable by other roads but the community has had very little consultation when it comes to creating these roads. The project that would connect the forest via the two new bridges is currently undergoing an environmental impact assessment at the request of the community.

With bridge construction being halted by the assessment, the Cree and Greenpeace are now trying to appeal to the Quebec government to have the project stopped altogether and the area turned into a biodiversity park. Natural Resource Minister Nathalie Normandeau has confirmed that she has received the request for the biodiversity park, but neither her nor Charest have made any announcements about it.

From left to right: Malcom Saganash (talleyman-W-05D), Scott Joly (Greenpeace), Kenneth Lowyck (Greenpeace), Nicolas Mainville (Greenpeace), Don Saganash Sr. (talleyman-W-05A), Wally Saganash (talleyman-W-05C), Austin Saganash, Paul Dixon, Allan Gull (talleyman-W-04A), Simeon Saganash, Philip Saganash (talleyman-W-09), Jean-Sébastien Zavallone (Greenpeace), Bruce Saganash, Louis Ottereyes (talleyman-W-04).

At the same time, Gull reaffirmed that Waswanipi is not anti-development but it's against development that is not sustainable and does not employ anyone from the community.

"Right now we see EACOM out there, ask them how many Cree people they have hired in the last five years?" Gull told the crowd.

He said there have been 25,000 kms of logging roads built all over Waswanipi territory and though the community hasn't stopped them, community members are angry for not being consulted and about the lack of environmental review. Pointing to a five-storey building, Gull said there is currently a pile of gravel that large waiting to be laid on new forestry roads throughout the territory.

The virgin forest of the Saganash family trapline is home to endangered woodland caribou, moose and many other species that comprise the community's traditional diet. Both Greenpeace and the Cree want to see the area protected for the preservation of these species.

"As you can see, the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi is the most impacted by forestry and this is the last intact forest that we have around the Broadback River and this is why we are trying to stop this bridge from happening," said Stanley Saganash who was on hand to represent his family.

Knowing what it is like to see his own family's trapline clear cut, tallyman Paul Dixon came to Montreal with the group to show his support. He said on his own land the only trees that remain standing are the ones on the islands.

"These are the last untouched forests in Waswanipi. I have come here to support my Chief. I feel like the Cree hunters and trappers are living on the edge of extinction," said Dixon.

After staging two separate protests, one in front of EACOM and then a second in front of Charest's office, neither the Cree nor the activists had lost their enthusiasm to see the land protected but still acknowledged that only the government can create the biodiversity park.

"It is a very slow process. The creation of a park takes years whereas the creation of a road can take just weeks. Opening up the forest and building bridges is very easy. We want to make sure that the process of creating a protected area gets catalyzed by this action," said Mainville.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE HEART OF EEYOU ISTCHEE 2011

Departure : January 15, 2011
Arrival : March 31, 2011

The purpose of the "Journey Through the Heart of Eeyou Istchee 2011" is to promote 'Cancer' awareness; remembering the ones that have gone before us; promoting positive lifestyle changes and to work toward concrete proactive measures in dealing with this disease in the Cree Nation.

The Journey will depart from Nemaska on January 15, 2011 and will travel through the Communities of Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Wemindji, Eastmain, Waskaganish, Waswanipi, Oujebougoumou, Mistissini and will return to Nemaska for its final arrival on March 31, 2011.

The Local Youth Departments will be responsible for the selection of participants and only one participant16 yrs - 35 yrs from each community will be selected. No smoking of cigarette will be permitted during the Journey.

Deadline to Register: December 2, 2010

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Kicked out of their own battle

Government funds go to the RCMP instead of Native women to address the missing and murdered

By Amy German

The federal government has finally announced where it plans to spend the $10 million they have allocated to deal with the almost 600 missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and not a cent of it will be going to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC).

For the last five years, NWAC's Sisters in Spirit (SIS) Initiative has been singlehandedly responsible for not only building a database and identifying 582 unsolved cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women since the early 1980s but making the issue public. SIS's funding mandate however ran out March 31 of this year and though it was previously implied that SIS would be included in the $10 million that the government said would be available to deal with the issue, they have been left out in the cold. The government has also asked that SIS drop its moniker if NWAC wishes to receive any further funding.

According to an October 29 announcement made by Status of Women Minister Rona Ambrose, the $10 million will be invested over the next two years to improve law enforcement and the justice system by creating a new database for missing persons and to provide specialized support in missing persons investigations.

Though the new database would contain information from SIS, it will not be as detailed as the one created by SIS and it will be for any individual across the country rather than only Aboriginals.

The funding plan and the restrictions on SIS have families of the missing women, opposition members and activists screaming mad.

"A big chunk of this money is not going to deal specifically with missing and murdered Aboriginal women. And, in fact, what they are doing on the backs of once again, Aboriginal women, is funding a pan-Canadian program that will not deal with the real problem," said NDP Aboriginal Affairs Critic Jean Crowder.

Crowder said that the Conservatives taking away SIS's name was nothing more than mean-spirited politicking and that their actions speak to their desire to sweep Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women issue under the rug.

Along with removing their name, Ambrose offered NWAC $500,000 from the Women's Community Fund to go forward with its next project, but the funds cannot be used for research or domestic advocacy that includes any variety of lobbying when it comes to the federal, provincial or municipal governments.

Crowder said by handing the majority of the funds over to policing and justice, nothing is going to be solved as the police have already shown a poor performance when it came to the Robert Pickton case in BC as it took years before they actually investigated. Beyond that, in many of the cases identified by SIS, the families complained that police officers never took them seriously and subscribed to racist stereotypes implying that these women were drug addicts and prostitutes. Regardless to the missing person's status, often times the cases of these missing women were never pursued.

For Bridget Tolley, a woman who lost her mother at the hands of the Sûreté du Québec and who has been with the SIS movement since the beginning, news of the $10 million going to police forces is devastating, but seeing what's happening to SIS is worse.

"For the women and their families to stop the research and stop counting after everything we have done is unbelievable," said Tolley.

Having been in contact with other Native families across Canada whose cases SIS was championing since the announcement, Tolley said many of them are outraged because SIS was the first organization to take their cases seriously. Once more, Tolley said this does not look like it will help Aboriginal women because when they go missing the police won't look for them and this money won't go to anything specialized for them.

Bridget Tolley with picture of her mother

Initially NWAC said it supported the government's plan for the $10 million shortly after the October 29 announcement, but on November 8 NWAC changed its tune, removing its support and citing serious concerns with the plan.

Among NWAC's concerns are that not only would the missing persons database be insufficient, losing the majority of details that SIS accumulated, but that waiting two years for it to be up and running is too long for the families to wait. Plus, much of the planned work would be redundant as the research has already been performed by SIS.

NWAC has since called upon the federal government to put aside funds in the next budget to actually address the needs the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and their families.

As for removing the Sisters in Spirit name, which they say has become a global brand synonymous with missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada, NWAC has expressed concern that the government is attempting to "curb their success."

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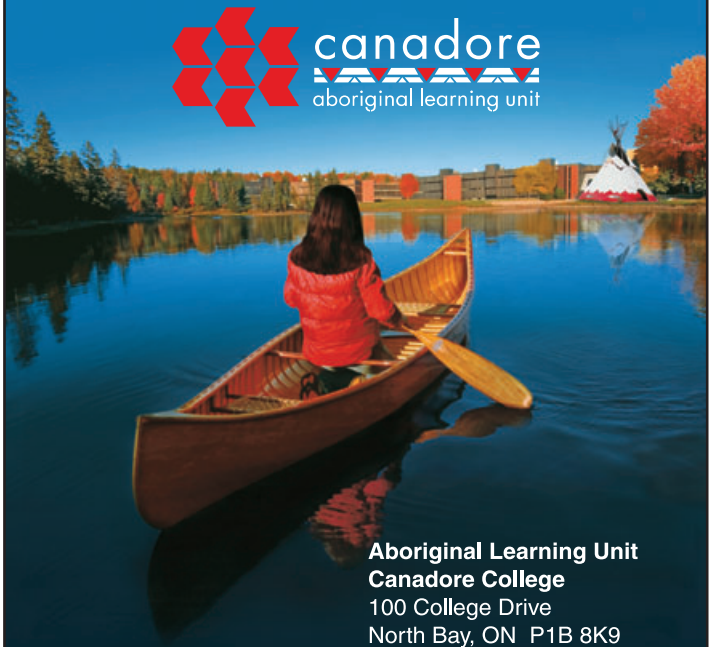

Aboriginal Learning Unit
Canadore College
100 College Drive
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Innu leaders threaten Hydro-Québec with global campaign

The Innu leadership is cautioning Hydro-Québec that they will engage in a global publicity campaign similar to the one the Cree staged in the 1990s should the crown corporation fail to address their concerns over a large-scale project on Innu territory.

On November 1, Innu leaders from northeastern Quebec made it clear to Hydro that they wanted certain concessions before the La Romaine project can go through, particularly in the form of a treaty guaranteeing their traditional way of life.

Without a treaty, the Innu will look to staging a high-profile protest similar to the one the Cree held in New York and throughout New England in the '90s.

Rosario Pinette, director of the Innu group that is lobbying the government, recently told the CBC, "We're seriously thinking of tarnishing the image of Quebec, of the Quebec government – and of Canada, too – along with Hydro-Québec, because they haven't been shy over the years about tarnishing our rights."

While the Quebec government has already given the $6.5 billion La Romaine project a green light as it is currently under construction, the Innu have not hidden their dismay over it.

At various points the Innu have sought to stop the project's construction but unsuccessfully.

Strateco discovers more uranium near Chibougamau

Strateco has announced that it has found more uranium deposits near Chibougamau in the form of a high-grade lens 1.5 km south of the three known high-grade lenses at the Matoush Project.

According to the company, on November 2 exploration of Hole MT-10-011 was completed and the presence of the new MT-36 lens was confirmed.

In a press release, Strateco CEO and President Guy Hebert stated, "The discovery of a new high-grade uranium lens (MT-36) outside the known uranium-bearing area is extremely important, because it shows that, just as we had always thought, the Matoush Project has the potential to become a world-class uranium mining camp."

Whether the project will ever become an actual mine is still contingent on the approval of residents in nearby Mistissini and Chibougamau who will be engaged in hearings on the exploration project from November 23-25.

Thompson Highway plays rereleased in Cree

Acclaimed Cree playwright Thompson Highway has just released two of his most famous plays in his mother tongue of Cree.

The two plays, The Rez Sisters and Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing, became available in Cree as of November 8 though they have been available in English and French since the 1980s.

Ironically, Highway told the CBC that when he wrote the plays almost 30 years ago he would hear them in his mind in Cree, yet the text came out on paper in either English or French. He feels these new Cree versions are in fact the original versions.

Highway says Cree is a more natural language to him as it is his mother tongue and neither his parents nor his two eldest siblings speak English.

At the official launch party for the Cree re-releases held at the University of Ottawa, Highway said he would like to encourage more Aboriginal thespians to perform in their Native languages because they are an endangered species. It is his hope that more Aboriginal writers write in their Native tongues as he credits them as those who have the means to save these languages.

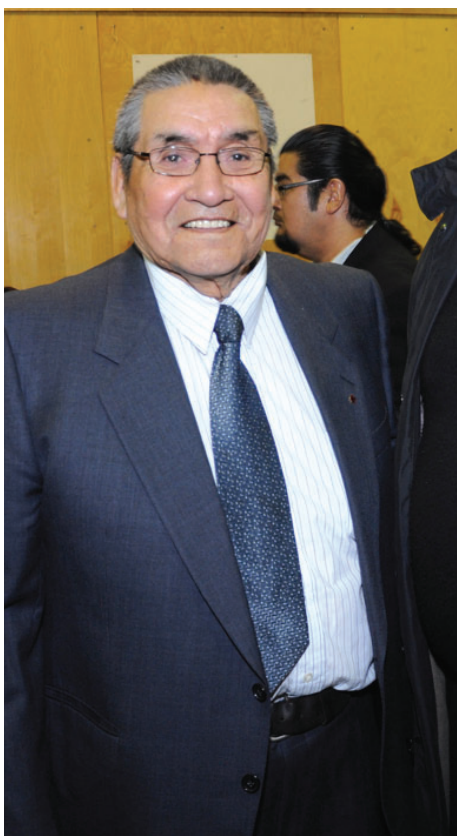
Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com

> THE MAN GOING OUT TO GET THE FOOD AND THE WOMAN STAYING IN CAMP GETTING WATER AND PREPARING THE FOOD. PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT WAY OF LIFE WOULD NEVER END. IT'S BEEN HARDER FOR THOSE OF US WHO GREW UP WITH THAT.

The James Bay Agreement:

35 years on Robert Kanatewat looks back and remembers the way things were

By Ernest Webb



It was 35 years ago that a young Chief would help shape the destiny of the Cree Nation. Robert Kanatewat, Chief of Fort George, was one of the signatories to the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. On the eve of the 35th anniversary, I sat down with him to talk about the Agreement. There is still a fire in him as he recounts those days and his resolve to keep working until the day he can't move.

On when the Crees first heard of the Projects: When Mr. W.G. Walton was around (from 1892 to 1932 he was the priest for Fort George, Wemindji and Whapmagoostui), he had already told people that they would come for the rivers. There was also a trader named Frank Dupuis, who asked a couple of people to take him to Upichuwin, the first rapids. One of them was your namesake Ernest (Herodier?). I guess he took people who could speak English. He took photos of the rapids from the different sides. They asked him why he was doing that and he answered them that they will see "the river closed up." I guess they didn't really believe him because they weren't too alarmed. It was when the project came that they spoke of it.

On the housing program: This was in 1968 or 1969 and Jean Chrétien was the (Indian Affairs) minister. We had him flown to Great Whale to look at the housing. We had the Chief get ready to show him three types of housing. The best, the worst and one in the middle. He was taken to the middle first and he said he's seen enough and didn't want to see more. That is how we got housing in Fort George.

On the first meeting of the Grand Council: I didn't know right away. It was Billy (Diamond) who told me. I guess it was Philip (Awashish) who told him, Ann Marie was his wife at the time, and Edna Neeposh. Those three organized the first meeting of the Chiefs. I took a charter with Josie Sam and Joseph Pepabano. The first meeting took place in Mistissini. They were in their 20s, Billy must have been 20 or 21. I was already in my 30s. That is how the Crees got together.

On Billy Diamond: He had a good memory. Once he searched his memory in no time he'd have the answer. He'd be very certain of the answer. Either the day, the month of what ever happened. He had a good memory bank. He was our first Grand Chief and I miss him.

On running Cree affairs: We wanted to make sure we had our own laws. That is the Cree-Naskapi Act. If we didn't have that, the government would've been running our affairs. The money that comes in for us, they would've been administering that. With that Act we run our financial affairs. We put some away each year for the future, as we know things get more expensive.

On the original court case: When Steven Tapiatic was on the witness stand for the court case, he was asked where he traveled in the territory. He answered that "to the east he'd go to the houses" which is Goose Bay. And to the north, Fort Chimo. He surprised the judge with his extensive travels.

On the move from the island Fort George to the mainland now Chisasibi: When we discussed the move from the island to the mainland, I told them if I only thought of myself I wouldn't move. We have to think of the future generations. We can't not move. We'll miss this place but we have to think of the ones not yet born.

On the Malouf decision: If the government had used the lawyers from Hydro-Québec and not their own and taken the case seriously, we probably would not have had the injunction. But the government didn't take us seriously. If we didn't win, I don't think we'd have anything that we have today.

On the extinguishment clause: It says we relinquish our rights. Some see it as relinquishing our rights on the territory. I see it as relinquishing them on the job site.

On the basis for the Agreement: For us, the base was the land and hunting rights. That is what we emphasized. That is what we wanted to hold on to, the land and the occupancy. Hunting and fishing.

On opposition to the Agreement: People from all across Canada were against the Agreement. About three years into the Agreement, they were talking about the Mackenzie pipeline from Alaska to the Yukon. The Natives there invited people to advise them on what to do. The AFN had a council of Elders who went. They invited Billy, but I went instead. I listened in on the meetings and then someone said, "Don't sell your land. Don't sell your land like the Crees." He told them other things as well. He was so sure of us. He told them we had no land left. So I replied, "Sir, how much of the Agreement do you know?" He said, "I know all about it. I read it more than once." I replied, "Your knowledge must be vast. I'm one of the signatories and I might understand half of it. I know of no one who understands all of it. It's the first I hear of someone understanding all of it. If you go to the National Assembly, you won't find anyone there who will understand all of it. And our lead lawyer, if you asked him he wouldn't be able to tell you all of it. It's the first time I meet someone who understands all of it."

On the transition: The man going out to get the food and the woman staying in camp getting water and preparing the food. People thought that way of life would never end. It's been harder for those of us who grew up with that. It is a completely different lifestyle but the younger generations like yours maybe have it easier to make the transition. We still have to keep our Cree culture but do it in a modern way.

On Cree expertise: We were considered not to have rights and looked upon as squatters on the land. If we understood what it is like now, we would have asked for more. Some of what we fought for didn't always jive. In order to keep going, we had to drop some things. We didn't ask for some things. For instance, to participate in the development. To become partners. Although we didn't have our engineers, our politicians, our experts, we had our own expertise we could have used. Take the first rapids where we scooped fish. They asked where the fish came from. We told him that they came from the sea and went there to spawn. There was a company that was given a contract for $30,000, another was given $21,000 to prove they came from the sea. "Yes the Indians are right. The fish do come from the sea." After $51,000 worth of contracts and we gave the information for free.

On not having enough water: You must remember what the river looked like in August? It was very dry. I told them at the time that they would never have enough water. They told me that's why they were damming the rivers. Look at today they have to divert other rivers to there. They never opened all the doors yet. The overflow spillway has never been used.

On the old days: At the school where I worked, a new principal had come in and he wanted a case of pop. He asked the students to get some. It was a Friday afternoon. At the time, a case cost $2 or $2.50. He gave me $10. I asked a couple of the older boys to go. They got back around 4pm. The principal was already gone. They asked what to do with the pop. So I told them to put it by the door. They put the case down with the receipt and change on top. He got back on Monday and remembered asking for the case. He looked at the bill and the change. It was all there. There had been kids running back and forth all weekend. On Monday morning it was all still there. That's Chisasibi for you in the old days. And nobody ever locked their doors.

On working: I will not quit until I can't move in trying to keep the Cree Nation working. It is my hope that we all do well and that we run our destiny.

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Cree Regional Authority
Administration regional Crie
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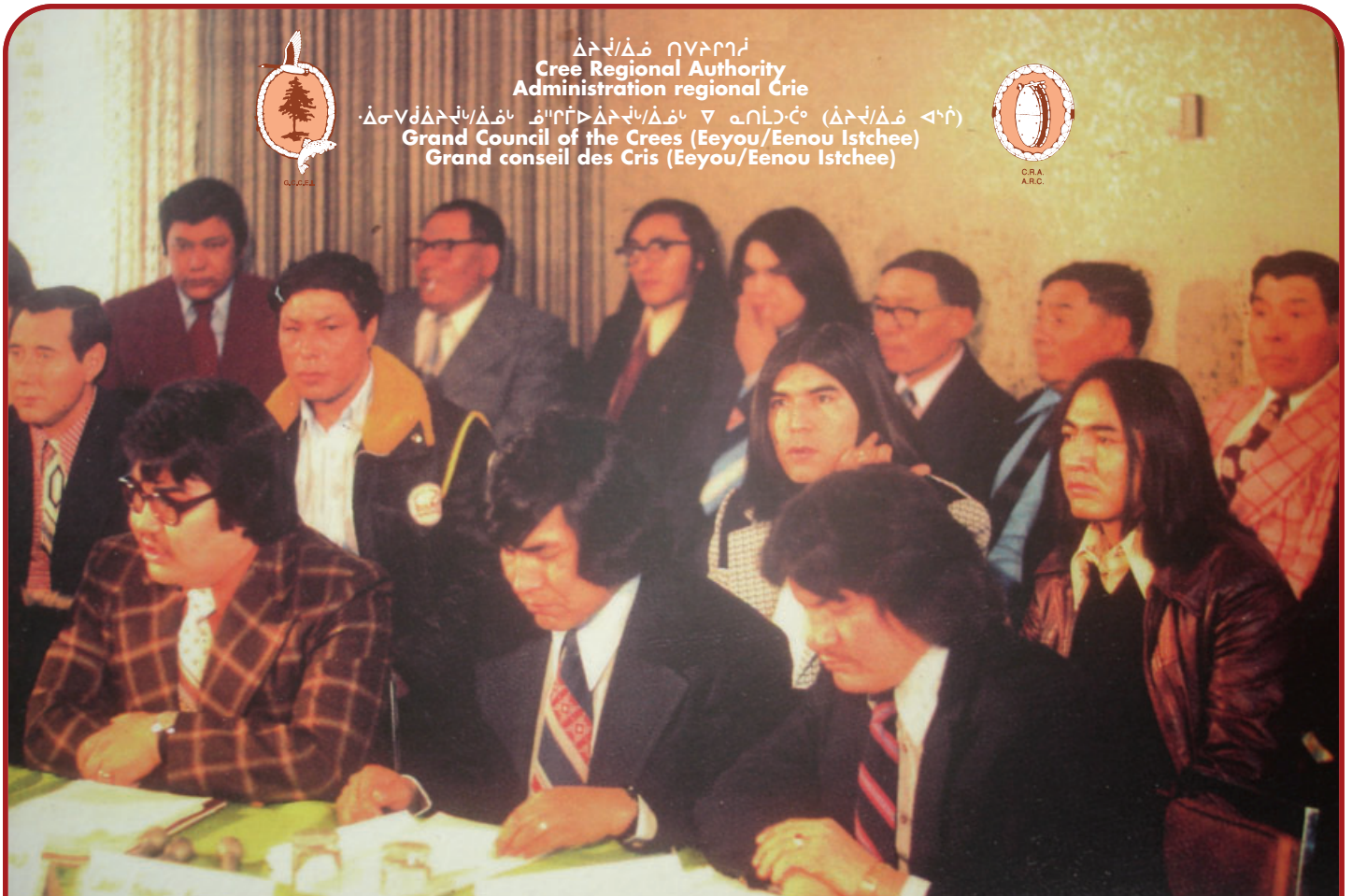
Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou/Eenou Istchee)
Grand conseil des Cris (Eeyou/Eenou Istchee)



Congratulations to the Cree Nation!

On this the 35th anniversary of the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, it is time for all to reflect on the progress that we have made in building our communities, our local and Cree Nation governments, our school and health boards and in setting up the institutions and companies that we use to create economic opportunity and employment for our people.

The Agreement is of historical importance because it is a living agreement by which we protect, promote and advance our rights!

Yes we have challenges to face, but the Agreement provides us means to overcome them. We should recognize that other Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and elsewhere have not been able to obtain the level of participation in the governance of their traditional territories that we have in ours. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement did away with the reservation system that limits so many others. Rather, it recognizes our rights over the whole of the territory and our participation at all levels with our partners, Quebec and Canada.

We salute those wise Crees who in 1975 signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. They took a brave step and we have fought and continue to fight, as a Nation, to make the Agreement deliver the benefits that they secured.

We have a tradition of working hard to live on the land. Today we do this in many ways as administrators, health workers, teachers, construction workers, hunters and in other professions. Our will to build and improve our way of life is the most precious thing that we can pass on to our children and to future generations of Crees.

Grand Chief **Dr. Matthew Coon Come**
and Deputy Grand Chief **Ashley Iserhoff**

Celebrating the entrepreneurs

The Eeyou Economic Group's third annual gala recognizes the best of the Nation

By Sonny Orr

A special event was held at Hotel Forestel in Val-d'Or, on November 6, promoted by the regional Community Futures Development Corporation: Eeyou Economic Group. It was a gala event focussing on the theme "The Power of Tomorrow" and based on our Cree culture and values. As the Eeyou Economic Group's third annual gala unfolded, familiar faces from far and near showed up to recognize the efforts of local Cree entrepreneurs.

Emcee Stan Wesley coolly delivered the agenda, an inspiring prayer from First Lady Mary Ann Coon Come opened the gala, and after having the blessings directed to a positive outcome for the show, the fine drum group Screaming Eagles of Lac Simon provided some appealing rhythms, welcoming us to their traditional territory of the Algonquin Nations.

Wesley acknowledged the special sponsors and guests of honour, who included Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs Pierre Corbeil, Amos Deputy Mayor Éric Mathieu, and Patrick Lamarre, Manager of Aboriginal Business Services at the Business Development Bank of Canada. The two organizations co-hosting the event were represented by Sidney Orr, President of Eeyou Economic Group, and Pierre Ouellet, Coordinator of the Secretariat to the Cree Nation – Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance; both sat with their prestigious guests at the head table.

Participants came from all over Eeyou Istchee, eager to find out if their local community business would garner that special recognition as being the best in their category.

Orr welcomed everyone, giving anecdotal experiences of an entrepreneur he admired and who inspired him, his uncle Roderick Herodier, who ran a restaurant in Chisasibi for many years at the commercial centre.

A new award was added in honour of late Albert Diamond, the Albert Diamond Award of Excellence.

Recognition of outstanding efforts in the following categories were awarded to:

Awashish Outdoors Outfitting Camp Hospitality Provider Award

Euphoria Smoothies
Fastest Growing Business of the Year

Cree Sports & Outdoors
Growth and Innovation Award

Jeremy Diamond
Youth Entrepreneur of the Year

Anna Bosum
Women Entrepreneur of the Year

Meechum Store
Business Award of Excellence

Abel Bosum
Albert Diamond Award

Osprey Outfitting Camp
Entrepreneur of the Year

Mistissini
Entrepreneurial Community of the Year

Another part of the Eeyou Economic Group gala was the entertainment and talent provided by Cree artisans from all over Eeyou Istchee. The presence of Robert Bobbish, Brian Fireman, Dale House and a traditional Cree drummer filled the venue with great music and special appearance from award-winning Roger House. The angelic voice of Candy Gunner of Mistissini inspired many while the traditional drum-style mixed contemporary songs of the Swallow family of Chisasibi made the gala all the more special.

A special thanks to Jessyka Simard of EEG and Chantal Hamelin of the of Secretariat to the Cree Nation – Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance and all the staff of both parties who made this event possible. Also, thanks to the presenters Marlene I. Kitchen, Robert Kitchen, Stephen Serafinowicz, Pierre Ouellet, Rachel Etapp and Sidney Orr.

Hydro-Québec and the Société d'Énergie de la Baie James
wish to honour the 35th anniversary of the signing
of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

The JBNQA has been a milestone in the relations between
the Crees of Eeyou Istchee, the Inuit of Québec and Hydro-Québec/SEBJ.
It has opened the way to a relationship based on mutual respect
and mutually beneficial economic and social endeavours.

Société d'énergie de la Baie James

Hydro Québec

One step forward, two steps back

Val-d'Or gets closer to finding a means to house the itinerant for the winter but will there be a permanent solution?

By Amy German

Since the end of June, homeless individuals with substance-abuse issues have been without a place to lay their heads at night after the temporary facility that the city of Val-d'Or provided for them closed its doors. There is now hope that these already marginalized and mainly Aboriginal individuals may get shelter for the winter but progress is slow and government funding has not been forthcoming.

Over the summer, the Nation ran the first two parts of a series detailing the homelessness crisis in Val-d'Or; this is the third, and final part in the series.

To recap the first two parts that the Nation published, Val-d'Or, like any city in North America, has facilities for the homeless, such as shelters and day programs, where individuals can get access to social and psychological services. It also has a Native Friendship Centre, which can also provide temporary lodging to Natives travelling through town. But if you are homeless and are under the influence, there is no permanent facility available.

In the fall of 2008, because of the growing need, community groups along with the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de Vallée-de-l'Or (CSSSVO) declared the situation a crisis as there was no facility to house the homeless and winter was coming.

The response was to start a pilot project called le Dotoir (the Dorm) to provide nighttime shelter, meals and showers to these individuals. The CSSSVO was only able to roll out funding from November to the end of June as the project was only supposed to be temporary until something more permanent could be worked out with the Agence des CSSS for Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

When the facility closed its doors in June however, there was no plan to reopen le Dotoir in Val-d'Or because of a dispute between different branches of government and social groups as to who was actually homeless and whether the problem should be addressed in relation to substance abuse.

During le Dotoir's first year, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre (VDNFC) also conducted a study on the situation, titled Field Study on Homelessness. What the report was able to show was that not only are Aboriginals overrepresented in terms of being homeless in Val-d'Or but that they are also a marginalized group within a marginalized group.

Now, in November, as the weather turns bitterly cold and the homeless are sleeping on the city's streets, Val-d'Or has just held its first symposium, titled Aboriginal Views on Homelessness.

The one-day event was put on by the VDNFC in conjunction with La Piaule de Val-d'Or, DIALOG, an Aboriginal research network, and ODENA, a university research group.

Edith Cloutier, the VDNFC's Executive Director, organized the event along with Sharon Hunter, the Centre's Director of Social Development and a board member at La Piaule. The goal of the November 9 event was to assemble everyone involved from government, justice, social development groups, street workers, shelters and other involved service providers to educate them as to the realities of Native homelessness.

Edith Cloutier

Because l'Agence in particular had argued that they were not responsible for providing for Aboriginals because they should be provided for by their home communities where they receive municipal funding and that therefore the Aboriginals on the streets are not in fact homeless, Cloutier said she felt that the symposium was necessary.

"The CSSS, the Friendship Centre and La Piaule have the same thinking on how we should strategize. It is l'Agence that seems to have a hard time understanding that vision," said Cloutier.

The vision that she was speaking of was one to offer a permanent service to the homeless under the influence instead of only providing a temporary solution for half of the year.

According to Cloutier, the symposium was a tremendous success as 70 attendees from various branches of government, the Cree Health Board, representatives from the Algonquin community, the Sûreté du Québec, concerned social groups and various other individuals took in a series of lectures on Aboriginal homelessness issues in Quebec and abroad.

"It created an opportunity to develop a common vision on how we should move forward in terms of developing a strategy to fight homelessness here in Val-d'Or with the (ethnic) specificity that we have in this territory," said Cloutier.

Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton and Pratte Bélanger Merge Forces!

Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton continues its flurry of mergers with the merger with the Montréal-based firm, *Pratte Bélanger comptables agréés inc.*, which is effective January 1, 2011.

This new team of more than 50 people, including five Partners, has served extensive public sector organizations, nonprofit organizations, and SME clientele for the past 25 years and is particularly known for the exceptional business relationship it has maintained with its Cree and Inuit clientele. Their expertise complements Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, thereby making the Firm a leader with the Aboriginal community in Quebec.

Ever more present in the business place

According to Jean Robillard, President and CEO of Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, "This strategic action is perfectly aligned with our growth strategy, which aims to increase our presence in the market by consolidating our full range of services to businesses across Quebec". Marc Bélanger, President of *Pratte Bélanger comptables agréés inc.*, agrees and adds that "we are very enthusiastic about this merger and we believe that our Aboriginal clientele will appreciate this comprehensive offer".

About Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton

Founded in 1948, Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton is a leader in the fields of assurance, taxation, consulting and recovery and reorganization services. The Firm owes its success to over 2,000 employees, including more than 220 Partners in over 90 offices in Quebec, Eastern Ontario and New Brunswick. The scope of its network makes it a leader in its business segment. For the past 30 years, Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton has been a member of Grant Thornton International Ltd providing its clients with the expertise of the member and correspondent firms in more than 100 countries.

For more information about our services or to do business with one of our professionals, please visit Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton's Web site at: **www.rcgt.com/aboriginalbusinesses**

Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton

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The Chief and Council, and members of the Cree Nation of Mistissini acknowledge and congratulate you on your achievements in receiving these awards. Your perseverance and commitment is greatly appreciated towards our community's and nation's growth. Congratulations!

Mistissini Award Recipients at the 3rd Eeyou Economic Group Annual Gala 2010

GROWTH AND INNOVATION AWARD
Cree Sports & Outdoors
Promoter: **Calvin Blacksmith**

BUSINESS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
Meechum Store • Promoters: **Beverly & Jack Quinn**

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR
Osprey Outfitting Camp – Piimi Plus – Depanneur – Videotron • Promoter: **Elijah Awashish**

HOSPITALITY PROVIDER AWARD
Awashish Outdoors Outfitting Camp
Promoter: **George Awashish**

FASTEST GROWING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
Euphoria Smoothies
Promoter: **Jeannette B. Shecapio**

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR
Community of Mistissini – Cree Nation of Mistissini • 2nd Year Consecutive Recipient

We would also like to acknowledge and congratulate the recipients from our neighbouring communities on their achievements in receiving their awards.

ALBERT DIAMOND AWARD (IN HONOUR OF LATE ALBERT DIAMOND)
Abel Bosum
Abel Bosum Consulting

YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR
Jeremy Diamond
JD Entertainment

WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR
Anna Bosum
Nuuhchimi Wiinuu Cultural Tours

According to Hunter, who moderated the event, l'Agence made a presentation on Quebec's new interdepartmental provincial strategy to combat homelessness and how it would be adapted locally by 2013.

"They talked a lot about working together. They seemed to prioritize the youth a great deal in terms of helping them and adapting programs for that particular clientele, but there was nothing for adults or Natives," said Hunter.

According to Stéphane Grenier, President of the Board for La Piaule and director of the Masters in Social Work program at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the local CSSS has become an advocate for le Dotoir over the summer months.

After being interviewed by the Nation in August in regards to La Piaule and the extensive research that he has done on homelessness in the region, Grenier was happy to report that CSSS Director Jerome Lamont had taken over the file when it came to fighting for funding from l'Agence for the reopening of le Dotoir.

At the same time, Grenier said there is no money yet for him to hire a staff or begin to order utilities, despite the fact that the CSSS told local media that le Dotoir would be up and running by November 15.

"Lamont called us and the other partners involved to reopen le Dotoir. I met with him on November 3 and he said he would go to Rouyn Noranda to see l'Agence to ask for a letter confirming $100,000 in funding for le Dotoir.

"But, this has yet to be confirmed. He asked this week for it and asked for the letter. We were told last year that there is money for us but later on the money wasn't there so Lamont paid for it out of his (discretionary) budget," said Grenier.

By press time Grenier was still without an answer as to whether the funding would come through for the temporary shelter. But regardless, Grenier has signed a lease to house the facility until next June.

Still, Grenier said the funds they will get pale in comparison to areas like Montreal where similar facilities get exponentially more to serve smaller shelters with far fewer beds.

In regards to a more long-term solution, because there is a plan already in place to drastically renovate La Piaule, Grenier and his team decided that they would include a separate wing to house le Dotoir permanently. The only problem is that l'Agence still has not committed to funding operational or funding costs.

Grenier has had to delay the rebuild of the facility for months to see whether there would be any form of contribution to run le Dotoir within La Piaule.

Recently, Grenier was told by Lamont that the CSSS would be able to handle funding for human resources and operating costs at le Dotoir, but this was contingent on getting funding from l'Agence. But, Grenier has received conflicting messages from l'Agence about how the homelessness issue was not a big enough concern to fund a separate wing. While Grenier was able to acquire private funding from other groups, the Cree Health Board included to the toll of $18,000, he is fearful that l'Agence won't come through with long-term funding to keep the facility running for years to come.

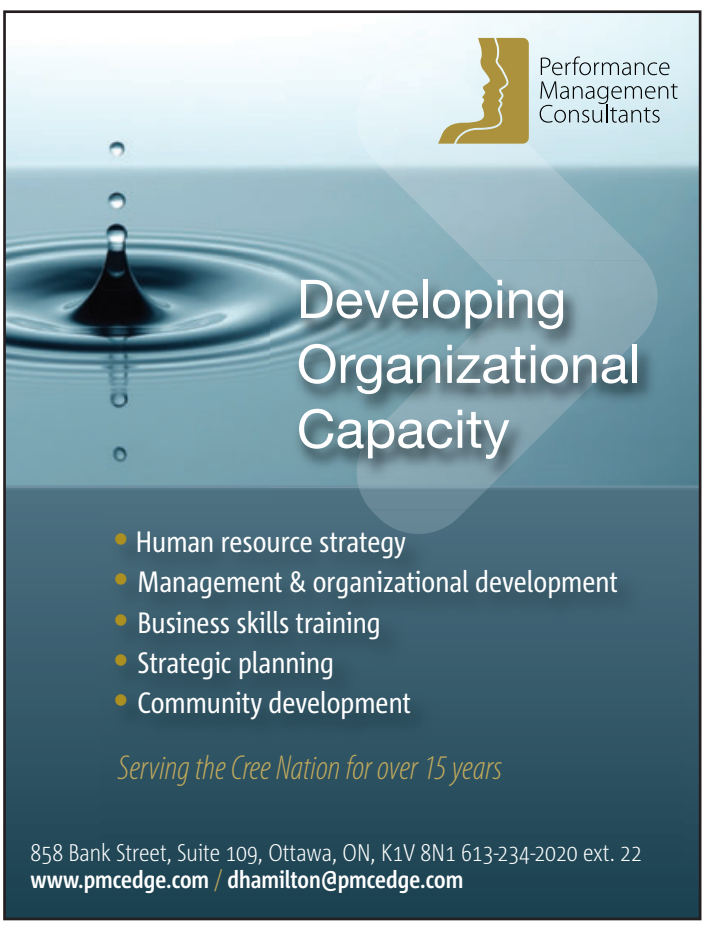
"They said this in the summertime. Now they are saying it is an issue for this year but perhaps not for next year. I heard somebody in the community speak about how they are trying to find another organization to handle the homelessness issue in the community instead of us and so we may build this whole shelter for nothing," said Grenier.

Grenier believes that it is because the l'Agence still is in denial that there is an actual homeless issue in Val-d'Or when it comes to Aboriginals who are under the influence because they are still perceived as "nomads."

After spending the entire day at the symposium as a participant and presenter, despite the fact that the Agence representatives in charge of the funding for the First Nations file and the region sat in front of him during his presentation, Grenier still had no word of whether the money would be available.

What Grenier can currently confirm is that le Dotoir will not be opening up for November 15 and hopefully funding will come through for it as soon as possible. Though construction will soon start on the new La Piaule, which will have sufficient space for le Dotoir, Grenier was uncertain whether it will ever be used.

"We are dealing with Aboriginal homelessness and there is a whole question as to whether they should be paying for services to go to Aboriginals? Should l'Agence pay for Aboriginals when they have their own communities and they have money? It is as though they are asking us whether they should be putting out money for Aboriginals to be drunk in the streets. In my eyes, this is a form of racism," said Grenier.



JAMES BAY CREE
COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY

The James Bay Cree Communications Society wishes to congratulate the Cree Nation on the 35th Anniversary of the signature of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

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Porte-parole de l'opposition officielle en matière de développement du Nord québécois

Official Opposition critic for the development of Northern Quebec

C'est avec plaisir que je tiens à souligner le 35e anniversaire de la signature de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois.

Cette entente fut le premier règlement moderne de revendications territoriales entre gouvernement et nations autochtones. Cette convention a posé la première pierre des relations harmonieuses que le Québec entretient avec les nations crie et inuite du Nord-du-Québec.

It is with pleasure that I wish to highlight the 35th anniversary of the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

This agreement was the first modern land claims settlement between government and indigenous nations. This agreement laid the foundation stone of a harmonious relationship that Quebec maintains with the Cree and Inuit nations of Northern Quebec.

Bureau de Québec
Hôtel du Parlement, Bureau 2.13 Québec, Qc G1A 1A4
Téléphone : (418) 644-1363 Télécopieur : (418) 644-3137

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Final countdown

Strateco, Mistissini, government and environmental activists gear up for the Matoush Project hearing

By Amy German

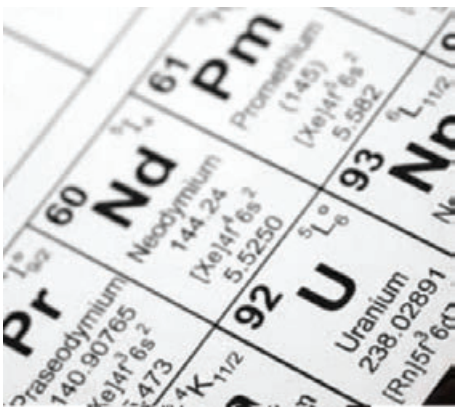
As each side of the debate over whether the Cree should allow an uranium exploration project on Cree territory gears up to present its position at the November 23-25 consultations on the Matoush Project, concerned parties are lining up to have their say on the matter.

This will be the second round of a two-part hearing process that will involve various branches of government that include the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) among others, Strateco, the company pursuing the project, federal and provincial environment assessment departments COMEX and COFEX, the communities of Mistissini and Chibougamau, a series of environmental protection groups and a number of concerned citizens.

> "IF THEY WANT TO GET UP AND TALK AGAIN ABOUT A MOOSE WITH THREE HEADS, THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO SAY THAT."

The first part of these hearings took place last May where Strateco had its chance to present the exploratory phase of the project in both Mistissini and Chibougamau. This because the project, located in the Otish Mountains, could have environmental repercussions for both communities. During the last hearing, anyone concerned was welcomed to pose questions to Strateco, which was legally required to provide answers. Now, groups, for and against the project, will have the chance to make their voices heard when it comes to the project. All the opinions, criticisms and objections will be taken into consideration when it comes to Strateco applying for its license for the exploration project.

Looking ahead to the meeting, Strateco CEO and President Guy Hebert said he is feeling very positive about the project as he and his colleagues have answered all 230 questions that were presented at the previous hearing. He said he has felt a great deal of support for the project. Though Hebert said Strateco will only have 15 minutes to present its position, the company will show the public all of the support it has received.



"We will be presenting all of the letters we have in support of the project and we have many of them from the Cree Nation and from different people living in Mistissini and other places. All of the mayors and the Cree Directors General will present their memorandums and we expect that they will support the project," said Hebert.

Hebert explained that though this will be the final hearing of its type, it will not be the last one as there will most likely be another hearing to focus on the project's technical aspects with the CNSC.

Hebert anticipates that the majority of the same individuals and groups will be present at this hearing, particularly those who have been vocal in their opposition to the project. He said if they held five hearings the same concerned citizens and environmental groups would be there.

"For sure, people are always going to be against everything, but that is their right. If they want to get up and talk again about a moose with three heads, they have a right to say that," said Hebert.

Still, Hebert maintains that his company's mining exploration project, which entails building an exploration ramp deep into the Otish Mountains, will have negligible, if any environmental impact.

While he understands Mistisini's uranium committee has raised issues with the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the exploration project, particularly where it concerns water safety, the potential for selenium contamination and other environmental safety concerns, Hebert said his people have no problem about conducting more research.

Mistissini Chief Richard Shecapio has made a similar statement to this effect in regards to the consultants the community has hired to review Strateco's EIS.

"The EEM (private firm) socio-economic review stated that there were some unanswered questions, and that they were looking for more detail in certain areas. Many of them are the same concerns the COMEX and COFEX review committees had during the summer. There were several other independent reports that outlined gaps in the collection of baseline data, and the cumulative effects this project has on the local environment.

"It is crucial that this data is collected properly before any effluent is released into the environment. If this is not done, how will we know if the environment is being changed as a result of this project? If we cannot measure the changes, we will not be able to fix the problem," said Shecapio.

According to Shecapio, the community is asking Strateco to provide more baseline data and to ensure that there is

EEYOU ECONOMIC GROUP/CFDC INC.

3rd ANNUAL GALA WINNERS

Eeyou Economic Group would like to thank all of the Sponsors and their donations to make this event successful. Also we would like to extend our appreciation to the individuals who attended the Eeyou Economic Group's 3rd Annual Gala with the theme of "Power of Tommorow – Eeyou Building Businesses on our values and principles"

It was a great success and hope to see you next year at our 4th annual Gala: Power of Tomorrow.

The Eeyou Economic Group would like to congratulate the award winners of the gala in the following categories;

1. The Albert Diamond Award was given to Abel Bosum for Abel Bosum Consulting from Oujé- Bougoumou
2. Youth Entrepreneur of the Year went to Jeremy Diamond for JD Entertainment from Nemaska
3. Growth and innovation award went to Calvin Blacksmith for Cree Sports & Outdoors from Mistissini
4. Business Award of Excellence went to Jack & Beverly M. Quinn from Mistissini
5. Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to Elijah Awashish for Osprey Excursions and Outfitting Camp from Mistissini
6. Hospitality Provider Award went to George Awashish for Outdoor Adventures from Mistissini
7. Entrepreneurial Community of the Year went to the Cree Nation of Mistissini
8. Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to Anna Bosum for Nuuchimi Wiinuu Cree Cultural Tours from Oujé-Bougoumou
9. Fastest Growing Business Award went to Jeannette Brien for Euphoria Smoothies from Mistissini

The Power of Tomorrow-
EEYOU BUILDING BUSINESSES ON OUR VALUES & PRINCIPALS

participation in the process by the Cree tallymen who have intimate knowledge of the area.

Though Shecapio reiterated that Mistissini has yet to take a stance whether it is for or against the project, the community's review committee will be meeting with its members on November 22. Shecapio and his council are strongly recommending that those who stand in opposition to the project or have concerns about it voice them to the local committee so that the committee can present an opinion that is representative of the people. Everyone will be welcomed at the hearing.

Hebert is aware of the consultations that Mistissini has done with private firms as they are public knowledge, posted on the Grand Council of the Crees' website.

As far as the concern about selenium contamination, which can be associated with uranium mining and has a very negative impact on fish reproduction, Hebert said there is no concern for the exploration project. In terms of an actual mine however, Hebert said he would only be able to speak about that after significant exploration is done and that's why they would like to conduct an exploration project.

Hebert said he was very aware that there had been many questions when it came to the water filtration system proposed in the project.

When asked if the community had valid concerns about the water filtration system, Hebert responded, "It is really too technical for me to talk about it but it has been addressed. This is one of the 230 questions that we answered publicly. It was questioned by the uranium committee as well as COFEX and we answered it."

According to Hebert, Strateco's answers to the 230 questions are available on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website.

On the other side of the argument as to whether the Matoush Project should happen, MiningWatch Canada, the mining ethics NGO which received a grant to perform its own independent review of the project's EIS, has its own list of concerns.

According to MiningWatch's Ramsey Hart, who will be presenting at the hearing, without a doubt, more baseline data is necessary than that which was provided in the EIS.

He stressed the importance of this because when it comes to impact benefit agreements, if they are negotiated based on insufficient data and the impacts are greater than anticipated, the deal then needs to be renegotiated.

In terms of the project in general, Hart said MiningWatch has a whole laundry list of reasons as to why this project shouldn't happen at this point and the range from the environmental dangers of uranium mining to how the project simply isn't economically viable at this point in time.

He explained that when the Matoush Project began in 2007, the price of uranium was about $100 per pound on the market, but it has since fallen to half that. While it's hard to estimate what the price will be like in the future, Hart said that with the influx of uranium already coming from Saskatchewan and Kazakhstan, the market could easily stay at status quo.

In terms of the EIS, Hart said the emphasis of it is based on meeing the metal mining regulations which are the legal requirements that Strateco has to meet but there is no guarantee when it comes to certain issues like the possibility of selenium contamination. This is because the EIS doesn't include selenium, which he said could be a major concern with a full-fledged mine.

"Selenium has been shown to have effects on fish and fish habitats and so the fact that you are within the regulations is no guarantee that you won't have any effect on fish life. So to say that there will be no impact is problematic, to suggest what those impacts might be and then we make a choice about whether or not that will be acceptable, whether they are localized or small enough to be accepted given other circumstances, that is a decision one had to make. But, you can't just say that there will be no impacts," said Hart.

For the upcoming hearing, Hart is teaming up with other experts on issues such as radon, radiation and other major chemical and biological factors when it comes to uranium. The idea is to ensure that everyone understands the risks associated with every aspect of the project.

Hart wants to remind the public that this proposed project will be located next to the proposed Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish Park project and wonders whether the project could have a negative impact on the park and potential tourism.

Then there is the issue of where the uranium for this project will be sold as there isn't a huge market for it in Quebec and Ontario's energy demands are declining.

When it comes down to it, it is the Cree who will have to make their voices heard as to whether or not they want this project to happen on traditional lands.

Whether you are for or against it, it is time to learn more about this project and make your voices heard.

For more info, go to:
www.gcc.ca/archive/article.php?id=357

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From Hero To Zero

By Ndiamon

Toronto's 10th annual ImagiNative Film & Media Arts Festival in 2009, had as its opening film, *Reel Injun*. Film festivals usually put up their guest filmmakers at fine hotels, get them rides to all the happenings, ply them with drinks all night long and make them feel like what Johnny Depp must feel everywhere he goes. And so it was for this author. But it does not take long for one to go from hero to zero in show business.

For this year's ImagiNative, I barely managed to have an Inuit production company come up with several hundred dollars for the train ride to Toronto, a modest per diem from the magazine but no fancy hotel room and not even a cheap motel. I did, however, have a friendly date.

I arrive in Toronto fashionably late and drop off my bags at my friend Jack's fancy hotel room, shower quickly and figure I'll worry about a bed when the time comes and we walk the few blocks to the Bloor Cinema for the opening film, *Boy*.

Outside the theatre, a long line has formed. I scan the crowd for my date, the lovely Ilsa Schnarre, an heiress, or so she claims. I've seen and talked to her only a handful of times so the night has the potential of turning ugly or I might end up a hero after all. The minutes tick by and still no Ilsa. Perhaps she won't show and she's my one hope for a place to crash. I pass the time snapping pictures as the crowd begins to move into the theatre. There must be over 800 people here.

Finally across the way I see the flash of her golden hair and I dodge traffic crossing the street. "Ilsa!" She turns, smiles and we hug a tad unsurely. It *is* our first "date" after all.

We go for a quick wine in a dive bar where she sidles close to me and purrs, "So? Is it true that diamonds are a girl's best friend?" I down my drink and suggest we hurry to the theatre before it fills up. We take our seats in the darkening theatre. She is quite lovely, and towers over me. I see people crane their heads, but it could be just my imagination running away with me. She leans into me and whispers, "Dark sex dork shuddering down the sidewalk…" I shudder. Later still, "I tangled in midair…" I shush her with a finger to her lips and we settle in to wait for the ceremony to begin.

Before the screening, the director shyly and hilariously introduces the film. He started out as a standup comic in his native New Zealand, or as the Maori call their paradise homeland Aotearoa. *Boy* is a feature comedy by Maori director, writer and star, Taika Waititi. Set during the mid 80s when Michael Jackson was *the* pop star every young Maori boy wanted to be. The film tells the story of a young boy who idolizes his deadbeat dad, played by Waititi, to the point of imagining him dancing and dressing like Michael Jackson. It's hilarious, sad, brilliant and Ilsa is delighted.

The film ends to wild applause. The director ascends the stage to take questions. The usual questions are shouted out. "How did you get the idea?" "Where was the film shot?" After a brief pause in questions my arm shoots up. Waititi points to me. I ask him to tell us about the upcoming Green Lantern movie he's featured in. He begins slow as if wanting to avoid the subject, " The Green Lantern was a comic book super hero… ummmm… he… he had a ring…? He hesitates and says almost embarrassed, "I play an Inuit in it…" He explains that a friend in LA suggested he could pass for Inuk. He winces and people laugh with him. "From hero to zero." He says shaking his head. I'm sitting two seats away from Inuit director Zacharias Kunuk and turn to gauge his reaction to a Maori portraying and Inuk. He is a Sphinx with a video camera, always a camera. I had no idea that the character Waititi is playing was Inuit and I feel like apologizing for his being embarrassed. A crowd has gathered around him as I approach so I turn and leave.

Outside a crowd has gathered and they're raving about Boy. Kunuk says Waititi would never pass for Inuit. "Maybe a mixed blood Inuk." I argue but Kunuk shakes his head, adamant. There is a party to be had at the Century Room on Queen Street. I gather a flock and we jump in a cab and head over. The music's loud and the place is slowly filling up. We order drinks and watch the parade. I run into people I haven't seen in a year. "Do you have a film playing this year?" they ask. "No. I'm writing about the seedy underbelly of the festival for *the Nation*." I shoot back. They look puzzled. I must work so I leave Ilsa in capable hands and go to snap a few pictures and mingle. I find the man of the hour, Taika Waititi, huddled with a few people and I introduce myself and apologize for my faux pas. It happens that we have a mutual friend in Aotearoa. Waititi's gracious and friendly. After a few words expressing my admiration of his work on The Flight of the Conchords and Boy, I walk off to find my date.

There she is, in the outdoor lounge where I left her. She's chatting and towering over my friend Ari. I'm tonguetied. She has to work the following morning and says she has to go. I offer to escort her out and she says something I can't make out. Does she not want to be seen with me walking her out? I walk her

The Fast Runner Director Zacharias Kunuk at the filmmakers' reception.

out anyway, extremely unsure of myself. Outside, we stand for a while in the drizzle smoking. Me: "I had fun." She: "Me too." Me, for the tenth time: "Boy was awesome!" She, tolerantly: "It was!" Am I imagining an uncomfortable silence here? Finally, "So? Friday maybe?" She says, "Yeah…" and turns and walks off into the night. I turn and enter the bar, still a zero without a place to rest.

The place is hopping, drinks are flowing, music's pounding. Everyone's there. Paul Rickard, Tracey Deere, Steve Bonspiel, Ernie Webb, Catherine

Boy director, Taika Waititi fields questions after screening.

"DID YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT?" THEY ASK. "TAIKA GOT ARRESTED." I REPLY, "HE'S AWESOME! WHAT DID HE DO?" BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW THE DETAILS. RUMOURS FLY THAT A PLATOON OF COPS WERE CALLED TO HIS ROOM AND HE WAS DRAGGED OFF SOMEWHERE.

Inuit High Kick director Alethea Aarnqaq-Baril

Filmmakers Pepper Obomsawin, Tracey Deere & Alethea Aarnaqaq-Baril

Filmmaker Caroline Monnet with Suvi West of Finland.

Guitarist Derek Miller backs up Martha Redbone.

Bainbridge, Zacharias Kunuk, and many more. At this point things start to get fuzzy. Fast forward a few minutes and I am walking through a hotel lobby looking for an after party. I knock on a door and it swings open. It's Taika looking like he's having a great time. We enter and the drinks flow. Extremely fragmented images follow. Someone leaning out a taxi window while I snap photos. A woman dangled upside down on the sidewalk. I wake up on someone's couch and there is a note beside me; "Gone to the festival." I walk for almost an hour back to the festival.

Straight away, I see people from the night before looking, thankfully, as haggard as I do. "Did you here what happened last night?" They ask. "Taika got arrested." I reply, "He's awesome! What did he do?" But no one seems to know the details. Rumours fly that a platoon of cops were called to his room and he was dragged off somewhere. My lie of writing about the festival's seedy underbelly appears unavoidable. I ask Sara whose couch I crashed on. The cops were called she tells me. "I dragged you out just before they arrived and I don't know what happened after that." In the end we agree that Taika was in fact not arrested but was merely barred from going back into his room and no one knows to this day what actually happened. Or at least, those in the know aren't saying.

There is a filmmakers reception later that afternoon. Veteran actress Michelle St John is there. Cree stand up comic Dawn Dumont is too. North of 60's star turned politician,Tina Keeper shows up. The group splits up and spread out to various functions throughout the city. ImagiNative is the largest native festival on the planet and it is impossible to attend the many films, performances and exhibits on offer. The rest of the night's a blur and I find myself again on some strange couch.

Friday finally arrives and I meet Ilsa at her place. It turns out that, for an heiress, she prefers very humble digs. She serves wine, we talk and head out to meet the crowd at a bar somewhere. Everyone's tired, especially me so we stumble into a cab and I finally find a welcoming bed. I feel less than a zero.

The next evening Zacharias Kunuk's new documentary, *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change* has its premiere. Preceding it is a strikingly beautiful short film, *Inuit High Kick* by Alethea Aarnaquq-Baril of Nunavut. I'm very impressed. Kunuk hasn't stopped doing interviews since the start of the festival and the show is sold out. The film avoids scientist talking heads and is entirely in Inutittut. A long discussion follows the film and Ilsa and I slip out for a quiet bite of sushi and wine on Bloor. The closing party is just down the street at Lee's Palace. Ilsa slips away again to meet friends and I enter the party alone. On stage is Inez. She's wearing tight hot pants and she seems to want to channel Shakira and Britney to little success, yet a crowd dances joyfully below her. Martha Redbone comes on with a drum and a bluesy band. I've never heard of either of them.

Closing time looms and my friend Jack pulls me aside saying they're going out to eat. I refuse but he insists. I relent and go to say my goodbyes. When I'm done, Jack and the others are gone. I walk out alone into light rain. I hail a cab to go in search of Ilsa. We can be heroes.

35e anniversaire d'une entente historique

Ce sont des ententes comme la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois qui forment des assises au progrès, et aux projets porteurs d'avenir pour le Québec et ses communautés. Et c'est grâce à l'ouverture, au respect et à l'engagement de visionnaires tels que le regretté grand chef Billy Diamond que leurs réalisations sont possibles.

Dans l'histoire du Québec, la signature de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois, en 1975, a permis d'établir les bases d'une relation de nation à nation qui n'a cessé de croître et d'évoluer à travers les années. Cette entente historique a ouvert la porte à un développement socio-économique bénéfique pour la nation crie, la nation inuite et pour l'ensemble du Québec.

Il est de ces peuples qui, en se donnant la main, se donnent aussi la chance de se réaliser et de faire avancer la société qu'ils habitent ensemble. Nous saluons, au nom du gouvernement du Québec, le 35e anniversaire de cette entente, un héritage précieux et inspirant.

Jean Charest
Premier ministre

Pierre Corbeil
Ministre responsable
des Affaires autochtones

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Working the Network

A new urban network is launched in Montreal to address the needs of urban Aboriginals

By Amy German

The Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network has just been officially launched to ensure that the 18,000 Aboriginals in the Greater Montreal Area get their needs met and are properly consulted when it comes to addressing their needs.

While anyone moving to an urban setting like Montreal experiences some difficulty adjusting to a new life, and as Aboriginals often come from more difficult realities or may experience more difficulty adjusting because they are from small and remote places, the transition can be difficult.

This is why the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network has come together with over 500 members comprised of organizations and individuals from three levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) as well as the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador and the Makavik Corporation to promote a different message and a new approach. Together they will work to seek out new solutions and joint efforts through shared responsibility.

On November 3, representatives from each of these groups held a press conference in downtown Montreal to unveil their new strategy as well as a new logo and a directory of resources offered to Montreal's Aboriginal community. Not only was the event a press launch but it was also a celebration featuring a Native drumming circle and a hoop dance performance.

Jane Cowell-Poitras, from the City of Montreal, spoke at the conference to assure the public that the city is committed to working with Aboriginals to help them integrate into the metropolis.

In keeping with this commitment, she spoke about how Montreal had contributed monetarily along with the Secrétariat aux affaires autochotones, the Office of the Federal Interlocutor of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec so that the Network could hire a full-time coordinator who will ensure that there is seasonal gatherings for the members. Montreal is also hosting the online version of the resource directory on its website.

"There are also a lot of things that are quietly going on behind the scenes. The police are getting involved and we are working more closely with community groups because Aboriginals are becoming more and more of our homeless population in Montreal. It is really important for us to have our hands in all over the place," said Cowell-Poitras.

Makivik Corporation President Pita Aatami expressed his pride to be taking part in a network that could only serve to help Inuit in Montreal, particularly as there are a growing number of his people sleeping on Montreal streets.

"It can't hurt to get some kind of a network to help Aboriginal people living in Montreal who have lived in very small communities before they moved here. A lot of the time it is hard for these people to move to a city of two million people when they have only lived in a community of 300 before," said Aatami.

In her address, Network co-chair Odile Joannette described how Quebec's Aboriginals are part of a history that has led to them being on the lowest end of the socio-economic scale in the province. But they are now part of the future that will be built as a result of these new efforts.

The Network will been broken down into a series of groups to focus on specific areas that include: art and culture, communications, employability-training and education, youth, health, social services and a steering committee. These groups will meet regularly to ensure that urban Aboriginals are consulted when it comes to programs and services geared towards them so that needs are met.

Still, according to Nakuset, the Network's other co-chair and Executive Director of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, many of the groups within the Network are still in the process of needs assessment and there is much ground yet to cover.

Pita Aatami

"Things are really happening and I am very proud. It is exciting and surreal to sit here and see all of this," said Nakuset.

While thrilled that so many major players within the Network participated in the press conference and the meeting that took place after, Nakuset acknowledged that many of the committees have a lot of work to do before they actually see more services offered. But at least the committees are in place and are assessing the needs of urban Aboriginals.

"We already know that we need a men's shelter/healing shelter. There are none. There's a Native women's shelter, there's Quebec Native Women Inc, but there's nothing specifically for men. They have PAC, but PAC is for men and women, we need something more exclusive for men," said Nakuset.

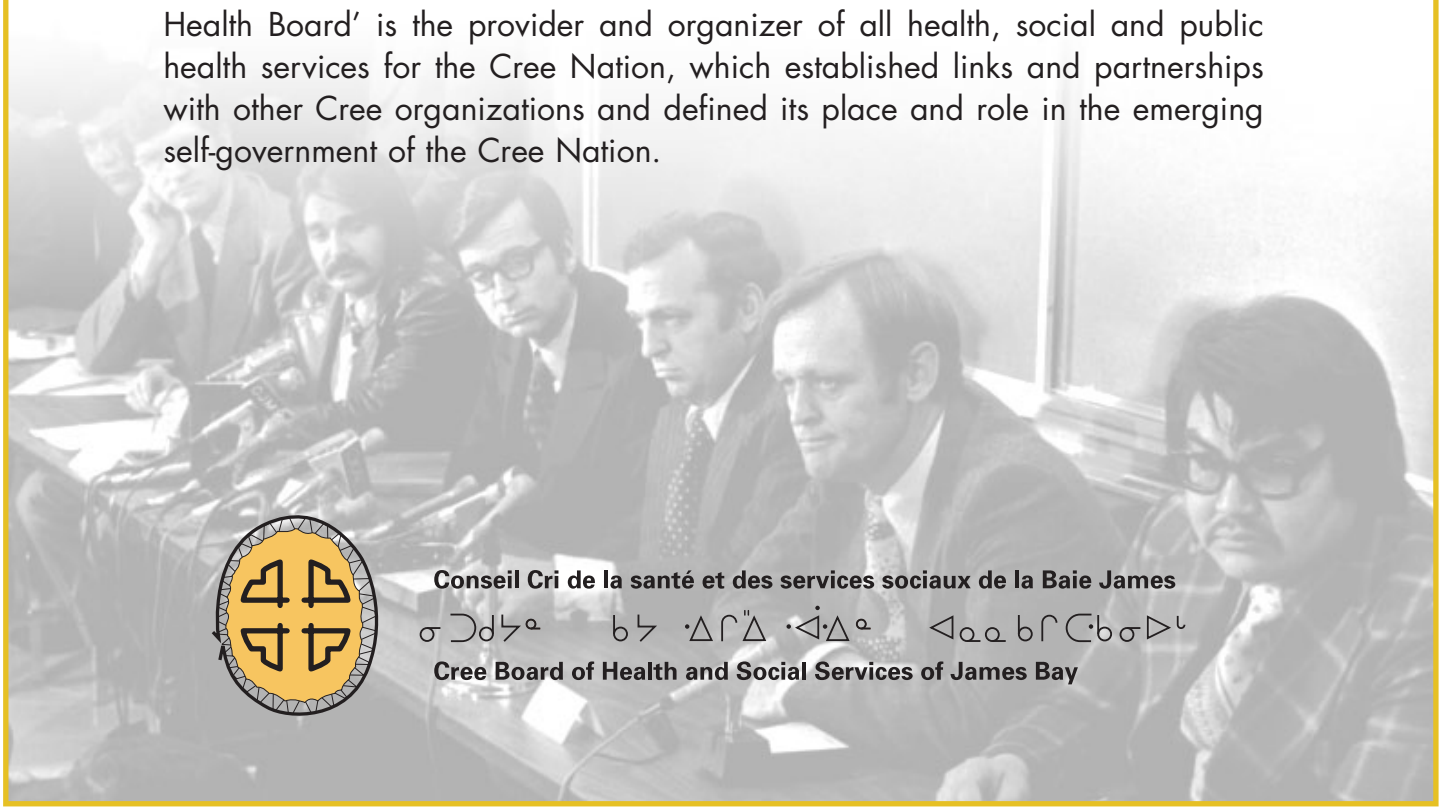
Congratulations to the Cree Nation on the 35th Anniversary of the signature of the JBNQA

The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay wishes to express its appreciation to the Cree Leadership and the whole Cree Nation on the 35th Anniversary of the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) was signed in November 1975. It was the first major comprehensive land claims agreement in northern Canada, heralding in a new era in aboriginal land claims.

In addressing settling native land claims and providing financial compensation, the agreements defined aboriginal rights and established regimes for future relations between aboriginal peoples and non aboriginals in the region and among local, regional, provincial and federal governments. Cree harvesting rights and land categories were set out and resource management regimes set up.

In addition to creating several organizations, the Agreement had provisions for the establishment of a Cree Board of Health and Social Services. The 'Cree Health Board' is the provider and organizer of all health, social and public health services for the Cree Nation, which established links and partnerships with other Cree organizations and defined its place and role in the emerging self-government of the Cree Nation.



Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

5 for Five

By Ernest Webb

It's that time of the year again. Halloween decorations have long been put away. The snow has replaced the rains and the lights have come on and the ornaments dusted off. I asked five people about their favourites for the holiday season. Edna Neeposh has maybe one of the busiest jobs in the Cree Nation and currently is Executive Assistant to Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come. Gordon Neacappo, one of the coolest guys I knew growing up, can be heard giving the news and putting on the tunes on Chisasibi's radio station. Ben Masty is the host of CBC North's Maamuitaau, a weekly TV show devoted to the Cree of James Bay. Phoebe Sutherland, with her husband Warren, own the Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro offering Native cuisine with their twist to the palates of those who make the trek to Ottawa's Byward Market. And finally, if you need help with your educational direction Stella Lameboy is for you. She works for the Cree School Board in Wemindji and has her own poster!

Favourite food for the holidays

Edna Neeposh: I enjoy cooking traditional food during the holidays... Of course, turkey & stuffing with all the trimmings and fruitcake I love!

Gordon Neacappo: Turkey with the works, dessert

Ben Masty: Every Christmas, Grandpa Masty invites the entire family for a traditional feast. It usually involves bear meat. So that's my favourite. Chisaayak ooditchshe!

Phoebe Sutherland: With my family: Good old turkey dinner, mash, stuffing...
With my in-laws: curry goat with rice and peas!!

Stella Lameboy: Turkey & gravy with all the trimmings, and candy canes, lots and lots of them, all thru the holidays.

Favourite holiday tradition/memory

Edna: My first memory is the year I received candies and an orange in a flour bag. I was told Santa brought that bag. Come New Year's Eve, we were told to go outside because the adults were sending Santa on his merry old way until next year with a bang. The men were shooting at the moon and they couldn't believe that we couldn't see Santa and his reindeer like they could!

Gordon: Christmas ornaments & decorations and, of course, the night(s) before Christmas.

Ben: The family gatherings on Christmas Eve.
Camping out for the night in the living room in front of the Christmas tree with the Christmas lights left lit.

Phoebe: The anticipation of opening presents!! Also, our entire Iserhoff Family would do a Xmas exchange. We would have a feast at my grandparents' small house where we would sit on the floor to eat and exchange them. Fun times!

Stella: Kids hanging their stockings, with photo shoot in evening before bedtime!

Favourite Christmas TV special

Edna: Honestly, I don't watch TV!!

Gordon: Any Xmas special I get to watch (the whole show) without missing any parts of it to the end.

Ben: When I was a young lad, I very much enjoyed "Alvin & the Chipmunks' Christmas Special" and "Charlie Brown's Christmas"

Phoebe: Charlie Brown's Christmas

Stella: Tie between "A Christmas Story" and "Scrooge" (with that Alastair guy in b/w).

Toy you were most excited to get as a kid

Edna: When I was a child, Christmas gifts were not as extravagant as they are today, and I was always excited to receive board games, especially "Snakes and Ladders"! I still like to play, in case anyone is interested in a challenge.

Gordon: Any toy I guess, don't remember. Didn't get much at my time.

Ben: When Nintendo came out, that's all I wanted. I remember opening the present and gave the thing a huge bear hug – I think I was close to tears. I still remember the "fresh-out-of-the-box" smell while setting it up.

Phoebe: This huge doll that was half my size!

Stella: A set of Barbies with a camper and boat! When I was about 10 I got my first Sony Walkman. It was so awesome!

Favourite carol

Edna: Silent Night and Little Drummer Boy have always been my favourites. I could never choose between the two.

Gordon: Silent Night (classic of course)

Ben: O Christmas Tree
For a giggle, South Park's Dreidel Dreidel Dreidel

Phoebe: Silent Night

Stella: Little Drummer Boy – in Cree.

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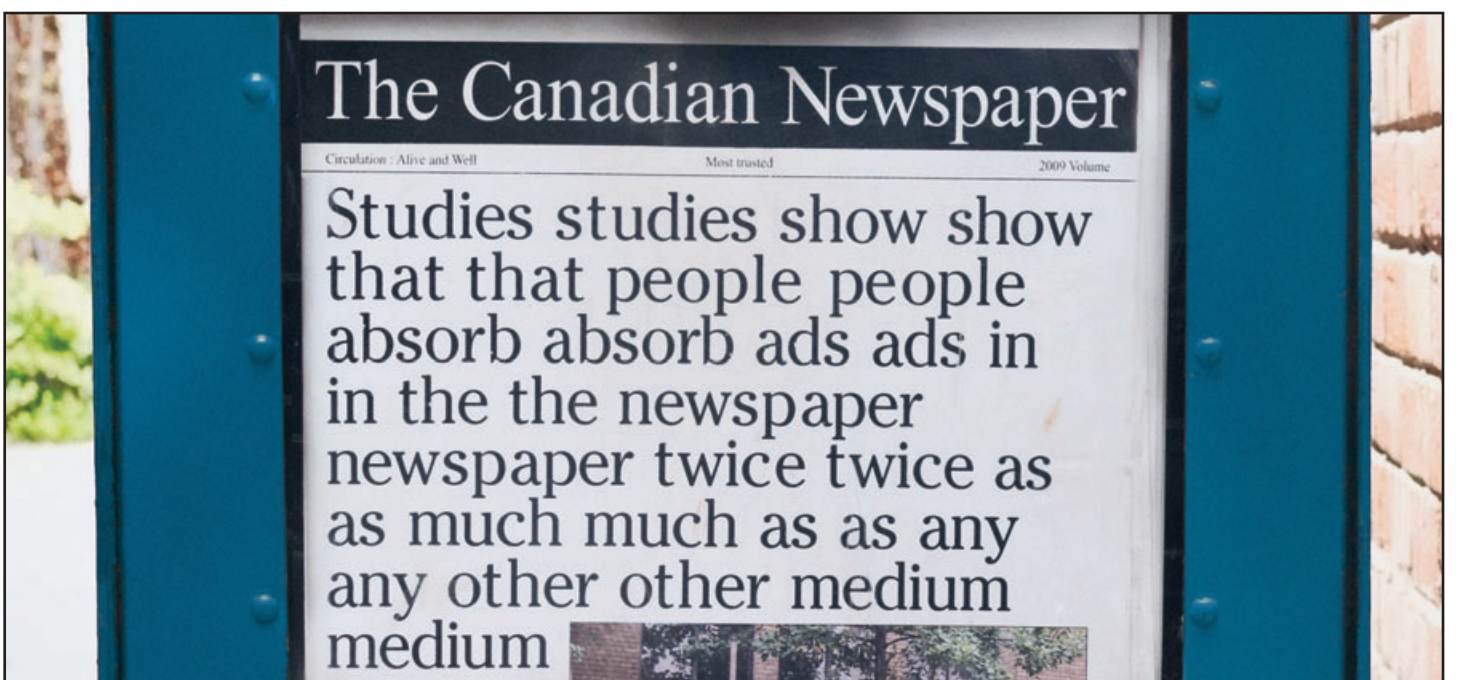
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BORDER LINES

By Lyle Stewart

Dust and dignity

The dust was the thing that got me in the end. Wafts of fine red powder that drifted gently on the breeze after the slightest disturbance instantly churned into billowing, choking clouds whenever a vehicle spun by in the opposite direction on the unpaved track.

I was in the back box of a pickup truck and suffering from the early throes of a severe case of Montezuma's revenge – the result of a bad decision to indulge myself with a street vendor's ice cream cone in Belize City the previous day. Now, across the northern border in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, not far from the small city of Chetumal, I found myself desperately trying to forestall the inevitable with quick spurts of hyperventilation whenever the nausea threatened to send my lunch of black beans and rice back whence it came. Finally, a cloud of dust led to a sneeze that triggered a stomach upheaval over the side of the truck as my head bounced up and down and vomit splashed down my shirt.

Despite this severe discomfort I felt guilty. Guilty because here I was worrying only about my ability to find a dark, quiet corner in which to curl up and expire, while in the cab of the truck was a woman in torturous agony because she was trying to deliver a baby, but had developed life-threatening complications. And all I could think of was a bucket, a wet cloth and a pillow.

This happened 20 years ago last spring, when I joined a human-rights delegation to investigate the Guatemalan refugee camps in southern Mexico. After visiting camps in Chiapas, then touring clandestine safe houses in Guatemala filled with desperate, native Mayans fleeing a genocidal government, we had re-entered Mexico via Belize to visit camps near the Caribbean coast. As luck would have it, a Chetumal-based doctor with the Mexican refugee agency agreed to guide us out to the rural, remote camps in Quintana Roo. Along the two-hour journey, my stomach started doing back flips as my tanned face rapidly changed into a pale green.

> MY STOMACH STARTED DOING BACK FLIPS AS MY TANNED FACE RAPIDLY CHANGED INTO A PALE GREEN.

While driving past the clinic of one camp, a nurse recognized the agency truck and came running out to flag us down. Soon after, she helped the young mother-to-be walk to the truck in her blood-soaked shift. I was exiled to the box, but I was secretly grateful to be heading back to Chetumal. All along the journey, the woman's occasional screams of pain reminded me that my own self-inflicted illness was nothing compared to her suffering.

The next two days were spent by a toilet before jumping on another bus to take us back to our base in San Cristobal, Chiapas, several pounds lighter. I never found out whether the woman and her baby survived after we left her and the doctor at a hospital in Chetumal.

But I think of her from time to time. Whenever life starts to drag me down and the despair over how much better it could or should be sets in, I try to remind myself about how it is for the majority of people sharing this planet. And that's what truly struck me about the Indigenous peoples of southern Mexico and Guatemala, both the descendants of the ancient Maya: despite terrible oppression, vicious racism and crushing poverty, despair was luxury that no one indulged in.

That did not mean the people I met were passive. On the contrary, most were forced to flee because they had tried to resist, peacefully at first, and then increasingly through armed struggle in the face of torture, murder and sadistic mutilation. Despite all that, there was a choice to live life to its fullest in whatever modest circumstances people were afforded. I have never felt happier than when accompanying the dignity of people most would pity as downtrodden.

The civil war in Guatemala ended roughly a decade ago, but the conditions that caused it have not disappeared. In a country with a majority Indigenous population, white descendants of the colonial Spanish still own the country's wealth, and with it, the political system. Attempts to address the genocide of the 1980s and early 1990s – as was promised during the peace process to end the 40-year civil war – have been muted, or derailed.

The struggle for dignity remains, however. A lesson learned covered in red dust and vomit, and remembered for a lifetime.

CREE NATION OF MISTISSINI CHARTS ITS OWN COURSE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE MATOUSH PROJECT

The third of three community information sessions was held in Mistissini on October 19th, featuring renowned water and mining impacts expert Dr. Monique Dube from the University of Saskatchewan. This session followed two previous community meetings staged by Mistissini's Local Environment Department - one in July focusing on radon and public health, and another in September with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, looking at their role in regulating the uranium industry in Canada.

The Council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini will be holding a Special Members Assembly on November 22nd in Mistissini the day before the final COFEX/COMEX public hearing on the 23rd, so that the Chief and Council can fully consider community questions and concerns.

"Mistissini's Local Environment Office decided after the first COFEX/COMEX public hearing back in May that we needed to be proactive in engaging our members so that they could make informed decisions about the social, environmental and economic impacts of this project," notes Hubert Petawabano, Mistissini's Local Environment Administrator. "We formed a local working group, we organized information sessions in the community, and we put together a Project brochure and a “frequently asked questions” document so that people would see that their thoughts and concerns were not only documented but more importantly were heard. We also got advice along the way from a sustainable development consulting firm that specializes in public participation in the Cree Nation.”

"The COFEX/COMEX public hearing scheduled for November 23rd will be our chance to formally submit positions to the review bodies. ‘We need to take full advantage of this opportunity," states Mistissini's Environmental Projects Coordinator Rod Quinn, "If we speak with a strong voice we dramatically increase the odds that the water, the lifeblood of our community, is protected. It is critical that the community is and continues to be directly involved in the monitoring process. Only in this way can we assure that the legacy of future generations is not squandered because we failed to act. We know the stakes are high. The environmental assessment is being scrutinized closely by many interested parties because it is the first advanced uranium exploration proposal being considered at this time in Quebec. There will undoubtedly be more, so now is the time to take the time to organize and get good information out to our people."

Mistissini’s Chief Richard Shecapio sums up the importance of the actions taken when he states emphatically that: "The Matoush information sessions and working group meetings have confirmed for me the importance of taking the time to properly educate members in our own language, in a manner that engages them. This is absolutely crucial under the current environmental

review process. Projects come and go, but our people and our land are here to stay - we need to make sure that we spend the time to ask questions, form opinions, and demand of proponents that they do so in a spirit of partnership and mutual benefit.

Deputy Chief John S. Matoush adds: "With the amount of mining exploration going on in the territory, our people are facing one big question - are we going to be pro-active in shaping resource development so that social and economic benefits are maximized and environmental impacts are taken care of properly? Or are we going to sit on the sidelines of environmental assessments and licensing processes and let development shape us? I think our members expect the former and that's what we gave them with the public participation process we initiated on their behalf with the Matoush project. With uranium, it's important our people make a decision as a community and that's the process the leadership is taking."

Project Background

The Matoush property uranium exploration site is just over 200 kilometres northeast of Mistissini on Category-III land governed by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). Strateco Resources Inc. has been conducting above ground exploration activities at the site since 2006. The company now wants to begin underground exploration to confirm the size and grade of the uranium deposit. This will require the construction of a ramp down to a depth of 300 metres (approximately 1,000 feet), along with two waste rock pads, a water treatment system (including sediment and holding ponds), a fuel tank farm, and a power plant and ventilation system.

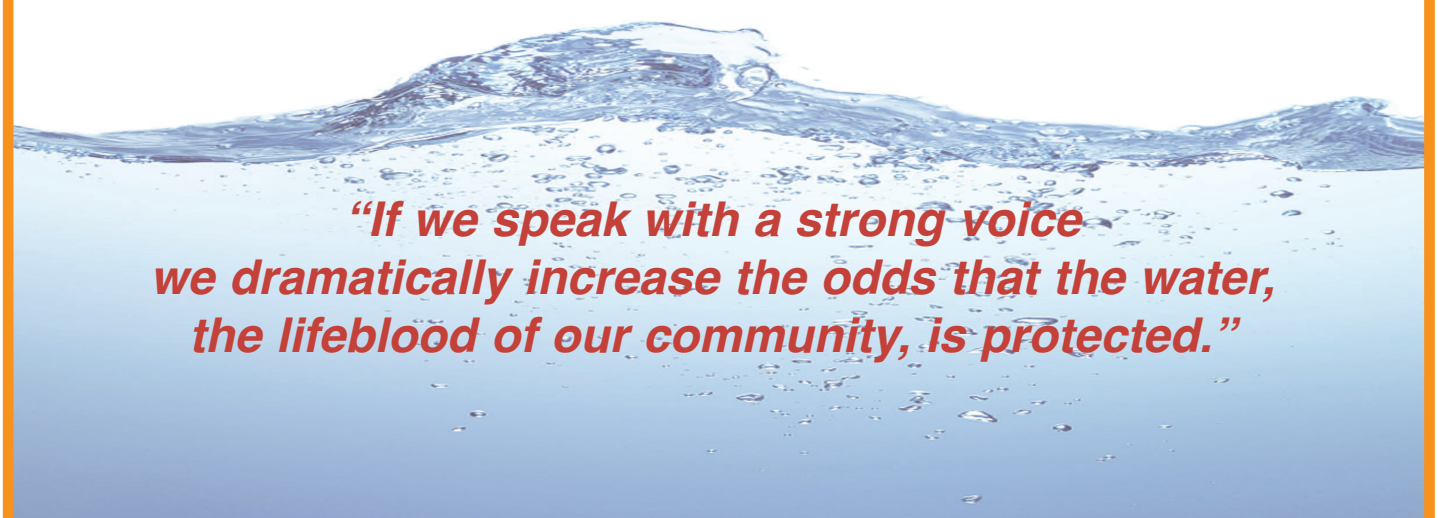
Review Process

The Matoush mining exploration project is required to undergo a social and environmental impact review under the terms of Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). The Project's environmental assessment officially began in August 2008 with a Notice of Commencement, followed by Strateco's submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment document in November of 2009. The first of two rounds of COFEX/COMEX public information hearings were held in Mistissini on May 25 and Chibougamau on May 26. The second round will be held on November 23, 2010.

It is of the upmost importance for all residents of Mistissini to attend this meeting to have their opinions outlined and documented.

For additional information, please contact:

Hubert Petawabano
Local Environmental Administrator
Cree Nation of Mistissini
tel.: 418-923-3461, ext. 213
Email: environment@mistissini.ca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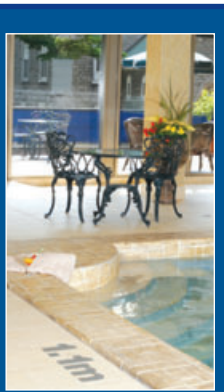

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Public Notice

ROUTE 167 NORTH PROJECT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE OTISH MOUNTAINS

Public Comments Invited and Federal Funding Available

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency invites the public to comment on the environmental assessment of the Route 167 North Project in the Direction of Otish Mountains and the conduct of the comprehensive study.

The Quebec Department of Transportation is proposing to extend Route 167 North, in the direction of the Otish Mountains, approximately 250 km to the northeast of Albanel Lake.

The Agency is seeking comments from the public on which aspects of the project and its potential effects on the environment are of concern to ensure that those issues are identified for consideration, as appropriate, in the federal environmental assessment.

To assist the public in providing comments, a background document is available on the Agency's website at www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca , in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry under reference number 10-03-54435. The background document may also be viewed at the following locations:

Chibougamau Municipal Library
601, 3e rue, Chibougamau QC G8P 3A2
Mistissini Counsel
187, Main Street, Mistissini QC G0W 1C0

Public comments received by December 17, 2010 will be considered. All written submissions received will be considered public as part of the project file. Interested persons or groups are invited to send their comments in the official language of their choice to:

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Dominique Lagueux, Project Manager
Route 167 North Project in the Direction of the Otish Mountains
1141, Route de l'Église, 2nd Floor, P.O. Box 9514, Stn Ste-Foy
Québec QC G1V 4B8
Tel.: 418-649-6444
Fax: 418-649-6443
Email: route167road@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

This is the first of several public comment periods that will occur during the environmental assessment of the project. Future public participation opportunities will be announced at a later date.

$50,000 in Funding Available for Public Participation

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is making available $50,000 under its Participant Funding Program to assist groups and individuals to take part in the federal environmental assessment of the project. This funding is intended for activities that will follow the public consultation currently underway. **Applications received by the Agency by December 17, 2010 will be considered.**

For information on the Participant Funding Program, visit the Agency's website. To submit an application or to obtain additional information on the program, contact:

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Jean-Philippe Croteau
Participant Funding Program
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor, Ottawa ON K1A 0H3
Tel.: 1-866-582-1884 or 613-948-1738
Fax: 613-948-9172
Email: PFP.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

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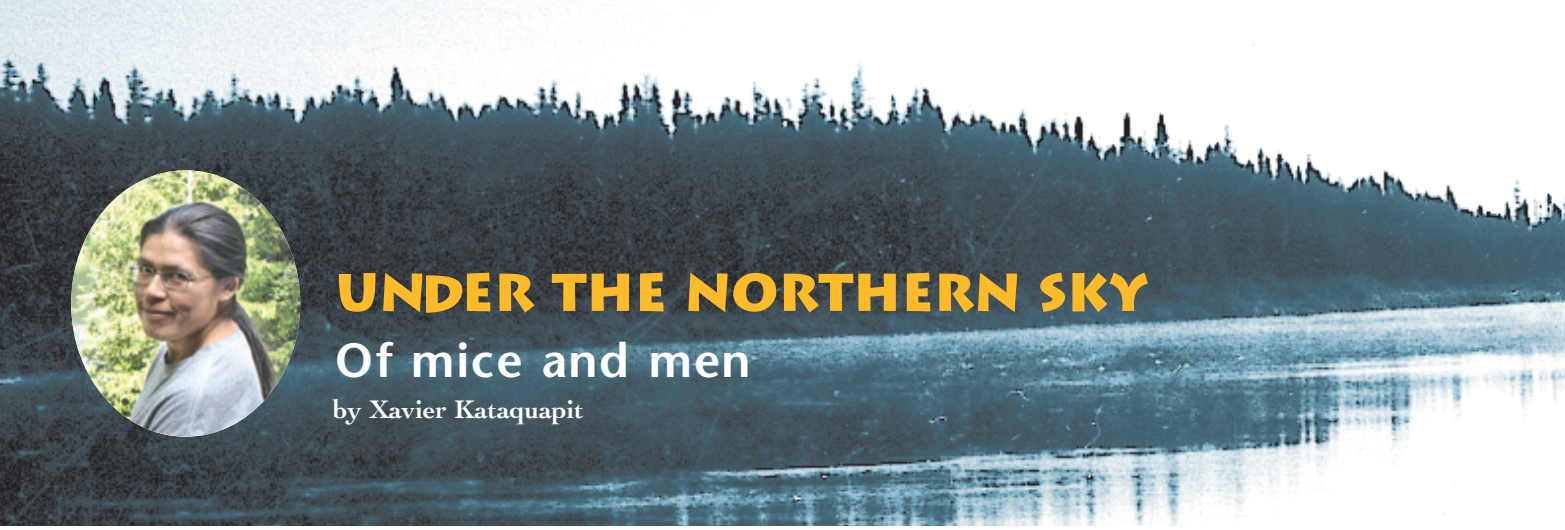

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Of mice and men

by Xavier Kataquapit

It's four in the morning, the room is dark and quiet as I lie still in my bed. I am in a cabin in the wilderness and in complete silence except that I can hear scurrying and scratching in the walls. The sounds move from the ceiling to my right, then shuffle overhead and disappear off to my left. A mouse or wahpookoosheesh has made his home in the crudely built plywood and insulated walls of the cabin I have rented. There are more than enough cracks, holes and broken boards in the building to allow a tiny mouse to crawl through these spaces.

This is a familiar situation for me in that I have had to deal with mice infestations many times before. I have stayed in all sorts of little cabins in the wilderness over the years and some were better than others. They ranged in quality from the regularly used hut that was comfortable for a week-long stay to an old shanty abandoned shack that had been more or less abandoned for years.

Wilderness camps are rarely sealed shut from the outdoors. These places are built out on the land without power tools and usually with less than ideal lumber, nails or fasteners. They are constructed to provide a shelter from the elements rather than serve as a proper house. Some of the shacks I have visited in the remote wilderness along the James Bay coast, had questionable construction due to the amount of rot and deterioration from decades of cool wet summers and then frigid winters. They were more or less open to all types of animals.

I recall staying in a two-storey building with my dad and my brothers one winter to set up our spring goose hunting grounds. The shack we settled into must have been 50 years old. The wooden main floor was well on its way to becoming part of the earth and the second storey where we slept was so fragile and flimsy that it actually swayed in the wind which rocked us to sleep. Animals of all kinds had made their home there at one point or another including our friends the chipmunks, mice, squirrels, foxes and bears.

You can always count on a wilderness cabin to have a mice problem. No matter where you go camping in northern regions, chances are if you are not careful and very clean, mice are going to share your trip with you. It is very difficult to close a space off to them once they decide to join you.

These little rodents are crafty and intelligent creatures. They are survivors and they need to be as careful and cautious as possible in order to live alongside humans. I have set so many mousetraps over the years to try to keep the populations down so that I could get a decent night sleep in a camp. I have discovered that it normally takes me several tries before I figure out how to stay one step ahead of wahpookoosheesh.

A few weeks ago, I laid out some traps at the northern cabin I rented. I used peanut butter on the tongue of the trap thinking it would be an irresistible treat for the mouse. In the morning, my traps had not sprung but the peanut butter had been carefully licked clean from the metal triggers.

I then pulled a page from my dad's many hunting tips he had taught us about trapping animals. I carefully and as delicately as possible set the triggers to sit at the very edge of letting go. Dad explained that animal traps had to work at the slightest touch so that they would spring the first time. There were no second chances in the wilderness when trapping meant food for the family or an income from the harvested furs.

I adjusted my mousetraps with a pair of pliers so that they would spring at the slightest feather touch. I laid out my peanut butter again and waited that night. In the morning I discovered that wahpookoosheesh had outsmarted me again by stealing the food and cleverly not springing the traps. Well, it was time to get creative. I added a modern twist to dad's trapping lesson and super-glued peanuts to the tongues of the traps. This time, wahpookoosheesh had no chance of avoiding the hunt and the two traps I laid out yielded two catches. My mouse problem was diminished and the scamper of mice in my room died down. In a way I also felt bad for mister mouse.

Mice were never really a huge problem for my family of hunters and gatherers up north. Mom was vigilant in monitoring and cleaning the kitchen, which meant it was very uncomfortable for any mouse to hang around. Whenever we discovered these uninvited guests in our home, an army of would-be young hunters led by a veteran trapper took little time in removing them. It was much the same in our camps in the wilderness. When we Kataquapit kids ran into a situation in a camp where there were mice it became a source of excitement for us and another test to apply what we were learning from our dad, the professional trapper. The mice were in big trouble.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

On November 2, 2010 our baby Aiden Nicolas Jamison House will be turning one year old. Jabweh, son you're growing so fast! I keep thinking about the first time I found out that you were growing in my womb. I was so happy! There was not a single regret going through my mind. The first time I told Daddy he couldn't wipe that silly smile off his face! LOL You make us so happy with the little things you do and we are very proud of how much you've learned in one year. You are one precious little boy & we love you so much! Happy Birthday son! Love always, Mam & dad'th :)

Happy birthday greetings go out to our son Robert Kawapit on November 3rd and to our grandson Desmond on his 1st birthday on November 27th, 2010. We love you both very much. You are both special blessings to our family. May you both be blessed always! Lots of luv 'n kisses from Mom, Dad and family

Happy 25th birthday to my love DALE HERODIER, who is celebrating on November 8th. I'll make your birthday the best day ever! Love Krystine xoxo

Happy birthday to my daddy DALE HERODIER! Love, your future hockey star Gabriel. I Love you.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.tel-jeunes.com)

Parent helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html

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